

# BRAVE AND BOLD

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No. 79

## THE TREVALYN BANK PUZZLE

OR

The Face in the Locket



Steve stood there with the kodak levelled at the two men. He himself had avoided being seen by stooping behind the desk, the moment he snapped it.



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*A Different Complete Story Every Week*

Issued Weekly. By Subscription \$3.00 per year. Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1904, in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, Washington, D. C. STREET & SMITH, 238 William St., N. Y.

No. 79.

NEW YORK, June 25, 1904.

Price Five Cents.

## THE TREVALYN BANK PUZZLE

OR,

### The Face in the Locket.

BY MATT ROYAL.

#### CHAPTER I.

A telegram was flashing over the wires of the Great North Western. The expert operator was ostentatiously making his fingers fly, because the sender of the message had generously "tipped" him, to induce him to speed, and was now watching him through the little office wicket.

"How long will the delivery take, operator?" was asked, a moment later, the stranger poking his head almost through the aperture.

"Not over ten minutes," was the reply; "you ought to have an answer in twenty."

"Quick, then, like a good fellow! A box of cigars or its equivalent for you, if you succeed in accommodating me before the train goes."

The operator paused in his manipulation of the key.

"Which way are you going, sir?" he asked, glancing at the clock above his head.

"Can't tell yet," answered the stranger. He instinctively moved back a step from the wicket, as if he did not care to subject his face to too close a scrutiny.

"Oh, I see," the operator murmured, in an apologetic tone, and resumed his work.

The message was dispatched. It ran as follows:

"UNION STATION, TORONTO.

"To Col. Willoughby, Windsor Hotel, Montreal:

"Have found him at last. He is here at this moment with an elderly lady. One or both about to take next train. Can't tell which direction. East and west express leave almost simultaneously. She, I think. Instruct quickly.

POYNTER."

"Operator?"

"Yes, sir."

"Try a cigar from my case, eh; and smoke my health when you get time. I'll be within call on the platform."

"Yes, sir. Thanks."

"By the way, operator——"

"Yes, sir?" interrogatively.

"Does Number Five go out first?"

"Both about together to-day, sir. Due in"—looking over his shoulder at the clock—"eighteen minutes. Late, you see."

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"Thanks. I'll be back presently."

The stranger went outside to take a turn up and down the platform. He glanced slyly in at the windows of the ladies' waiting room each time he passed.

He was a tall, square-shouldered man of about forty, with a dark face, clean-shaven but for a mustache, piercing black eyes and black hair. He was very fashionably dressed, and looked like a gentleman of means and social standing. All his movements were quick, from his jaunty light step to the careless twirling of his gold-headed cane.

Twice he paused at the spot where he could look in at the window of the ladies' waiting room without being particularly noticed by certain of those inside. Both times his sharp look fell on two persons seated in the furthest corner of the room. He seemed greatly interested in them and their movements, and even in the expression of their faces as they conversed together, but he always drew back a little when they happened to turn their eyes toward the platform.

Those two persons were an elderly lady, dressed in black and wearing a widow's veil, and a tall, athletic-looking young man of about twenty, presumably her son.

The latter was sufficiently good-looking to have most of the eyes in the room on him, but what attracted the most was his quiet, well-bred manner, and particularly his demeanor toward his companion. He attended to her in a way that bespoke a world of affection and care.

The watcher outside noted all this and smiled:

"By Jove, a pretty sight; I never saw such devotion!" he soliloquized. "A handsome lady, and he—I declare, he surpasses the father. Wonder if he's the elder. Well, I've struck the trail at last, working chiefly on a photograph. Won't Willoughby be glad? Aha! what's Mr. Ewart doing now?"

The watcher drew back from the window in time to escape being seen by the young man, who had risen from his seat, and was now coming toward the platform to see if the train was coming. It was an odd circumstance that in passing the window the young man should let his eyes fall and rest for a second on an arm leaning on the sill outside. The rest of the person was not visible. There was photographed on the youth's mind, to be recalled at a crisis in the future, the picture of a peculiar style of gold button in an immaculate white cuff. It was a small thing to be destined to play a part in a life-and-death tragedy.

It was just at this moment that the operator appeared at another door and beckoned to the stranger. The latter hurried up the platform, taking care not to let the youth see him, and entered the general waiting room.

"Well?" he asked, advancing to the wicket.

"Here you are, Mr. Poynter," said the operator, holding up a message. "Just came. Answer called for."

"H'm! H'm!" said the recipient of the message, and he read as follows:

"G. T. R. STATION, TORONTO.

"Edward Poynter:

"Good! Watch ticket purchase and follow. Don't let out of sight at any cost. Report everything.

"WILLOUGHBY."

"Operator?" whispered Mr. Poynter, slyly passing in a third "tip."

"Well, sir?" said the other, rendered friendly to the point of obsequiousness.

"Did you notice where a young man and old lady bought tickets for?"

"No, but I see them in the next room. They had tickets already, I think."

"H'm! H'm! What train is that coming in?"

"That's the west-bound express."

The watchful Mr. Poynter walked to the window and looked out. He hurried to the wicket.

"Operator," he said, "dispatch this to Montreal, and wire the answer to me to an address I will telegraph you later. Here are three dollars," and he hastily scribbled the following:

"West bound. Will follow. Am going to settle out West. Remain in so that you can answer early quick messages.  
POYNTER."

"A ticket for—say, Guelph, operator."

"Yes, sir."

Next moment the west-bound train rolled out of the Union Station. In a front car sat Mrs. Ewart and her son, Stephen, and a few seats back from them, behind a wide-spread newspaper, sat the watchful Mr. Edward Poynter.

## CHAPTER II.

The village of Clairville had had its ups and downs.

But about five years previous to the opening of our story the great Trevalyn Mills had been established there, and then a street railway was laid connecting it with Weston, and a railway was built that ran through it at the southern end—it was a long and scattered village—having Toronto for one terminus and Collingwood, the splendid lake port, for the other. So that Clairville promised to become, and indeed, already was, a thriving little town. The Trevalyn Bank had established a branch there, and the Trevalyn Iron Works had settled, and the Trevalyn car shops had applied for a bonus and got it, and altogether the place was on the high road to prosperity, with Trevalyn the chief name in it.

Mr. Trevalyn, who owned the mills, the bank, the street railway, and practically everything in sight—who had made the place—was a very handsome man of about fifty years of age, the scion of a great English family.

He had three children, one daughter, Miss Gwendolin, and two sons, Mr. Harold and Mr. Philip. None of these children had been seen in Clairville as yet, though Mr. Trevalyn and his wife had spent some months there, and had lately purchased a fine residence, and announced their intention of living permanently in Clairville.

Just as our story opens, a report was going round that Mr. Trevalyn's children were about to come to the village to reside with their father and mother. The three had just returned from Europe, it was said, where the boys had completed their university course, and the daughter had been graduated from some famous seminary. Expectation and curiosity were rife among the villagers, es-



pecially as it was rumored that Miss Gwendolin Trevalyn was a remarkable beauty, and had been a belle among the ladies of the English nobility.

On a bright afternoon in June, a train came rolling into Clairville and discharged several passengers that are to be characters in this narrative.

First, there alighted from a forward coach, a stalwart young man, who helped his mother down and escorted her to the station platform with a care that attracted the attention of three other passengers, who had just alighted from a rear coach.

These were a young lady and two young gentlemen, who had enough about them in common to appear as members of the same family, and who were so fashionably dressed, and so obviously well-bred and refined, as to be immediately set down as members of the upper or aristocratic world. Behind them came the lady's maid and a couple of other servants, who helped on the impression by relieving their masters and mistress of all care concerning the luggage.

"Look at that young chap, Hal, that's helping the old lady. Wouldn't he make a good halfback in a Rugby scrimmage?" said one of the young gentlemen quietly to his brother.

"By Jove! you're right, Phil," replied the other, raising a single eyeglass and surveying critically the object of the remark. "Such shoulders! He'd make a good stroke for an eight-oared crew. Reminds you of Arkwright, of Baliol, a little, doesn't he, eh? Only he has a finer-looking face. There's his profile now—see?"

The train rolled away from the station, but not before another passenger had alighted—our friend, Mr. Poynter. He crossed the platform and walked to the stand back of the station where the little row of cabs and carriages stood.

There were not many of these signs of metropolitan life in Clairville, only one for each hotel, and two private conveyances. One of these was a most stylish equipage, with a liveried coachman on the box, and a footman standing near the step. The young lady and her two brothers got into it.

Into the other cab Steve Ewart helped his mother, and when Mr. Poynter saw this, he turned, and, handing his portmanteau to a hackman, announced his intention of patronizing the Royal Arms Hotel. He had observed all that was necessary. He could rest some of his mental faculties for a while, especially after he had dispatched another telegram.

The whole Ewart family, three in number, were now in Clairville. They had formerly lived in Canton, Ohio. After the death of the father, two years before, Steve and Will had come to this little Canadian village, got employment and prospered. They had toiled and saved till they got a little home for their mother. A week ago it was fully furnished, and in shape to receive her. Steve applied for and received a leave of absence, went off to Ohio for his mother, and here they were returning.

Happiness seemed in store for them, and yet, alas! a cloud was on their sky.

### CHAPTER III.

There are a few things more for the reader to become acquainted with before we proceed to tell the story of the great commotion that stirred the inhabitants of Clairville in the summer of 189—.

The chain of startling and thrilling events that kept the simple village people in a fever heat state of agitation for weeks began at or about nine o'clock on the night of Tuesday, June 21, 189—.

The great drama began then without warning. There fell upon the stillness and quietness of Clairville, like a thunderbolt from the skies, a dreadful happening that by morning was known throughout the length and breadth of Canada.

But it is necessary to lead up to it by making the reader acquainted, at least slightly, with the chief personages concerned, and the best time for this is between the hours of eight and nine o'clock on the night of June 21st.

#### AT THE TREVALYN OFFICE.

The main Trevalyn office was not at the mills, but over a quarter of a mile distant from them, that is to say, up in the village. It stood on the corner of Main Street and South Street, and was next door to the Trevalyn Bank. In fact, the two were in the same building. They occupied the lower floor of a three-storied brick structure that was divided at the bottom into two equal parts by an archway capable of letting one team at a time pass through into the yard behind. There was no means of communication between the bank and the office. To go from one to the other, it was necessary to pass out onto the street, and walk a few paces past the archway. Neither was there connection between either of them and the floors above. To get to the second floor, which was wholly occupied with the offices of the Kemp law firm, it was necessary to mount an outside stairway on the South Street side. The office, like the bank, consisted of two large rooms only, one in front, one in the rear; one public, the other private. Unlike the bank, which we will refer to later, the office had two entrances. You entered the public room by a door on Main Street, you entered the private room—if you were important enough to get permission—by a door on South Street, or from the front room.

These details are essential to an understanding of what follows.

It was pay day for the Trevalyn employees. The paying was usually done in the office, between the hours of six and nine.

At a little after half-past eight, Steve Ewart entered the office, and found a number of men waiting to receive their checks—waiting their turn.

"Hello, Bob," he said, addressing big Bob Barton, the Hercules of the mills, "did you see my brother, Will, around this evening? He hasn't been home to supper yet, and mother is uneasy."

"Oh, ay! you have your mother with you now. No, I haven't seen Will since—"

"I saw him a while ago," spoke up old Simon Cobb, crossing over to the open window near which the two were standing. "I think he's in next door, Steve. Leastways, he was goin' in when—"



"In the bank, you mean?"

"Ay! I saw a light there about ten minutes ago," said another workman, "and it looked like Will's head behind the desk."

"Ah! sure enough, I forgot. This is the twenty-first of June," remarked Steve. "I heard Will say he and the other clerks would have to work a few nights to get out the half-yearly report for the manager. Patterson is going off on his holidays soon."

"I don't like that dude, Patterson. He's payin' teller, ain't he?" said old Simon, in a whisper, as a movement among the men brought the three nearer to the desk.

"Hush!" said Bob Barton. "We mill hands have nothin' to do with those snobs in the bank, except Steve, here, whose brother, Will—beg pardon, Steve, I didn't mean as Will's a snob. He's a decent young——"

"Oh, that's all right, Bob," laughed Steve, "get up there and get your check. It's your turn," and he good-naturedly pushed the burly mill hand toward Manager Longstaff's desk, where the bookkeeper and the time-keeper were handing out envelopes to the men in succession, and getting their signatures in the big receipt book.

The operation of paying the Trevalyn hands usually took all of three hours, there being much time occupied with examining the contents of the envelopes and signing.

At present, though it was getting close on nine o'clock, there were some twenty men in the office. They were about the last of the long list of employees, those who had gone home and got their suppers before coming hither, instead of coming direct from the mills at six o'clock, and waiting with the first big crowd.

Mr. Longstaff's usual custom was to sit at his desk behind the big counter, and simply watch his clerks passing out the check envelopes. If any complaints were made, or questions asked, he was ready to deal with them in his short, gruff way. He was an autocrat in his sphere. He ruled with a rod of iron, and was heartily feared and disliked by most of the men.

His sphere, too, was a large one. With one exception he was Mr. Trevalyn's head representative in the village. That exception was the bank manager, Mr. Pettit. Each was independent of the other. Each had his own sphere; but, while Mr. Pettit was the financial head, he ruled only three men, the bank clerks; while Longstaff had sway over nearly a thousand men in all, some of them living in other nearby hamlets, and was regarded as the manager representing Mr. Trevalyn. He had nothing to do with the bank clerks.

Longstaff was a somewhat remarkable looking man. He was fully six feet three inches in height, square-shouldered, slim, yet compact, and as straight as an arrow. He was said to have muscles of steel, while most people who looked in his face, especially when he was angry, claimed he had eyes as piercing as a hawk's. He had a long, clean-shaven face, short, dark hair, heavy brows and gray eyes. The ladies said he was handsome. Few of the men had a good word of any kind for him.

On this night he seemed ill at ease, or in a hurry. He was gruffer than usual. He stood or moved about behind his desk instead of sitting and pretending to skim a newspaper. He answered some of the men's complaints with stern threats of dismissal.

"I saw Mr. Trevalyn himself go into the bank a while

ago, Steve," whispered old Simon, as another movement brought them nearer their pay."

"Indeed," was Steve's reply. "He goes in a good deal lately."

"Yes, locks himself up in the back room, they say. I suppose it's to have a look at that big diamond of his."

"Hush, Simon! Don't gossip," whispered Steve, laughing. "That's a fault of the whole village. There's too much said about that mythical article."

These were references to a diamond of immense value, which, it was said, Mr. Trevalyn owned and kept for safety in the big vault in the back room of the bank, regarding that as the most secure repository for it. The rumor was that he went in occasionally, when he was in town, to see if it was safe. Steve was one of the unbelievers.

"Say, Steve, this 'ere diamond, now——"

"Hush, Simon! Big Bob's having a row with Longstaff."

"Wish he'd crush Longstaff in his fist. He could do it too, if he——"

"Hush! It's the docking system again."

"No, you don't, Mr. Longstaff," Bob was saying, angrily, shaking his fist threateningly toward the manager. "You don't dock my wages for nothin' this night, or I'll——"

"You'll what?" asked Longstaff, quietly, walking close to the counter and within reach of Bob's ponderous fist. "You'll what?"

The men all stood back and watched the two in awe and silence. Bob was the terror of three counties and the mills. Longstaff changed not a muscle of his face, but stood coolly eying Bob, with his hands in his pockets, and his whole demeanor that of a teacher questioning a refractory child. But there was a terrible look in his steely eyes, and before that look Bob retreated.

"I'll go and see Mr. Trelawny himself," he cried. "He's in the bank this minute."

"See him," said Longstaff, calmly. "He'll give you the same answer."

"If he does, I'll punch his bloomin' head off!" roared Bob, and he strode out of the office, pushing and elbowing the men out of his way as if they were so many ninepins.

All these little doings were recalled afterward.

It was in the neighborhood of ten minutes to nine when Steve, almost the last of the crowd, stepped to the desk to draw his fortnight's pay.

He was surprised to find that, apart altogether from his absence, a portion of his wages was docked for a trifling cause. He asked Longstaff for an explanation, and got in reply a surly, "Mind your business. If you don't like it, go elsewhere."

Steve knew that Longstaff hated both him and his brother, Will, as he hated all who would not treat him as a superior person.

"Do you mean to tell me that you'll not even explain why I'm docked, Mr. Longstaff?" Steve asked, quietly.

Longstaff rose from his chair and approached the counter in the very manner he had with Bob Barton. He spoke and acted with the intention of cowing the youth, of terrifying him, if possible:

"What do you mean by the words 'not even?'" he demanded, fiercely.



Steve's reply staggered those who heard it.

"I mean," said he, quietly, "that I have witnessed much of your injustice and persecution of the men, and I am wondering if you'll go to such lengths as to refuse me the explanation I ask. I defy you to withhold an answer. Now, why am I docked, Mr. Longstaff?"

It was the manager that turned away cowed, this time.

"Find out," he said, curtly, and walked into the back room, closing the door after him.

"Good boy, Steve," whispered several of the men. "That's what Bob Barton was afraid to do."

For about five minutes Steve stood waiting for Longstaff to reappear. Then he said aloud to the bookkeeper:

"Tell Mr. Longstaff that I, too, will see Mr. Trevalyn. Good-night, Simon. Good-night, men."

He stepped out onto the sidewalk, turned toward the bank, and came to a dead stop, directly in front of the dark archway.

He was startled by a pistol shot.

It was so loud as to seem almost beside him.

The nine o'clock bell rang.

The mystery had begun.

#### CHAPTER IV.

In order to get a thorough understanding of the situation and become better acquainted with the characters involved, we will visit other scenes, and see what was going on on that memorable night of June 21st.

About ten minutes of eight o'clock, a woman stopped before the big gates in front of the Trevalyn residence, and asked the old lodgekeeper if Mr. Trevalyn lived there.

"Yes, ma'am," replied the old man, "but he's not home. He just went down through the village."

"Ah!"—she seemed a little embarrassed, or excited. "Do you think he'll soon be back? Do you know where he's gone?"

He was a somewhat cranky old fellow, and refrained from telling her what he well knew. To her next question: "Has anyone else inquired for him within the last few minutes?" he returned an absolutely chilling, non-committal reply, and went inside.

She walked up and down at a little distance from the gates for some time, as if she were expecting some one. Then her patience became exhausted, or she got a new idea, for she hurried away, muttering:

"I must find him before it is too late! Ah! yes, he is sure to come by that street."

She was plainly trying to avoid all persons but the one she desired to meet.

She was well-dressed, young, handsome and of neat figure. She wore a strikingly becoming green hat trimmed with chiffon.

"Ah! there he is at last," she said, as away ahead of her she saw a solitary figure, that was likewise apparently trying to avoid notice. "He will elude me if he can."

This seemed true enough, for the man, who was walking toward the Trevalyn residence at the time, on seeing the woman approaching, turned round and hurried away

in another direction. He wore a gray peaked cap. He was far from being well-dressed.

#### IN THE BANK.

It was about a quarter after eight o'clock, in the front office of the Trevalyn Bank. The manager, Mr. Pettit, and two young clerks, Patterson and Will Ewart, were working overtime to get out the half-yearly report.

"Boys," said Mr. Pettit, suddenly laying down his pen, "I am going out for a little while. If I am not back by nine o'clock, you can lock the front door and go home."

He had already locked the one door leading to the back room, where the vault and safe were.

Scarcely was he out of the bank, when Patterson threw down his pen, closed up the ledger and proceeded to change his office coat for another one that he had concealed from the manager. It was evident that he was intending to go to some kind of party. He was arrayed in evening dress, which the office coat had effectually concealed.

"You may be a fool, if you like, Ewart," he said; "but I'm not going to stay here any longer to be worked to death on an empty stomach. Pettit himself was cute enough to skip out!"

Will Ewart said nothing. He had noticed his companion's impatience all the evening, and now he saw the dress coat and the expansive white shirt front. Patterson was something of a lion in the upper social circle.

"Be a fool, then, Ewart," he continued, arranging his tie before a mirror he kept in his drawer. "As for me, I have a little affair on hand to-night that'll net me more profit than sitting at those infernal books."

"Poker," thought Will, and for a moment he debated the wisdom of exhorting Patterson to lead a less fast life.

After Patterson had taken his departure, Will worked alone at the books.

Presently he was slightly startled by seeing a tall, dark man enter from the street without knocking.

"Good-evening," said the latter, "can you tell me where I'd find Mr. Trevalyn?"

"No," replied Will, noticing that the stranger was well dressed and gentlemanly in his bearing. "He may be at his residence."

"Thank you. A nice night," the other said, and went out again, leaving Will well impressed with his pleasant voice and nice appearance, so far as the glaring light between them allowed a scrutiny of him. He wore gloves and carried a cane.

For some minutes after this Will kept his head bent over his book, and added up long rows of figures. He did not hear the door opening again, and was thus somewhat startled when a voice close to the wicket of the teller's cage said:

"What! are you working alone, Ewart? Where's Mr. Pettit?"

It was Mr. Trevalyn himself, the great millionaire owner of the bank and the mills.

They talked for a few moments, Will mentioning the half-yearly report, and explaining how Mr. Pettit had stepped out to get a breath of air, and then Mr. Trevalyn said:



"I'm going in to the inner office for a little while, Ewart. You need not wait for me. I have a key for each door."

The front door opened suddenly, and some one from the sidewalk called to Mr. Trevalyn in a low voice, adding the word "Quick!"

Will did not know the voice, nor did he catch a glimpse of the person. He saw Mr. Trevalyn walk out of the bank, closing the door after him, and then he returned to the column of figures he had been adding. Before Will reached the bottom, he was conscious of another interruption close at hand—there were noises, and he thought a voice spoke—but he hurried on, and reaching the last number, hastily scribbled down the total on a piece of blotting paper, so that he could not forget it. Then he looked up, and saw that Mr. Trevalyn had re-entered, and was already unlocking the door of the inner or private room.

It did not escape the youth's notice that Mr. Trevalyn was greatly excited. His hand trembled as he manipulated the key. He went into the rear room, leaving the door a couple of inches ajar, and presently Will saw that the lights within had been turned on, and he knew the millionaire was seated at Mr. Pettit's desk.

There was a peculiarity about the Trevalyn Bank, in that it had only one entrance—the door on Main Street. The door Mr. Trevalyn had just passed through was the only means of communication between the two rooms. He could not get out of the back office by any other way than that by which he had just gone in.

The big vault was in the back office. It had three compartments, in the innermost of which was Mr. Trevalyn's private safe. Only the manager, Mr. Pettit, possessed the combinations of all three of the vault doors. Only Mr. Trevalyn could open the safe.

Two of the vault doors—the inner ones—could be opened by Mr. Trevalyn. The clerks were intrusted with the combination of the big outside door, and that only, so that they could put in and take out the bank books when occasion required. Thus responsibility was divided. When the doors were all closed, no one man, not even Mr. Trevalyn himself, could penetrate the interior of the safe without the aid of one or more of the others.

It was about a quarter to nine o'clock that Will heard the voice of Mr. Trevalyn calling to him to come into the back office. He stopped in the middle of a column, walked around the counter and, pushing open the door, entered.

He saw Mr. Trevalyn seated at the manager's desk with some papers before him, and a pen in his hand. A worried look was on his face.

"Shut the door a moment, Ewart," he said, softly. "I have something to say to you in private," and then he proceeded to seal and address a package.

As Will closed the door the spring lock clicked. No one could get in now without a key. In going out, one had only to pull the door shut after him, and, as we have seen, it would lock of itself.

A glance round the room showed Will that everything was in perfect order. The vault was closed. The two high, frosted windows at the back were locked at the bottom, though the upper half of one of them was slightly lowered from the top. Mr. Trevalyn had evidently pulled it down a couple of inches himself since he came in, the night being very warm.

Mr. Trevalyn began the interview by pledging Will to secrecy in the matter of the little mission he was going to intrust him with. Then he asked him to listen carefully to his description of a man named Basset, whom he was to meet. He also asked him to open the first door of the vault for him.

"You will make sure by inquiring his name first," he said. "Let no one see you, or learn anything of it, if possible. If you fail to find him, wait ten minutes beyond the time. Now, go like a good fellow. It's not far from nine o'clock."

The interview lasted about three minutes.

Will stepped out of the inner office, leaving Mr. Trevalyn there alone. He drew the door shut and the spring lock clicked. He went behind the counter, donned his street coat and hat, and closed the big book he had been working at. He could hear Mr. Trevalyn moving around in the other room. Presently he heard him lock the door with his key, so that it was now double locked.

He hurried to the front door, and as he turned on the threshold to adjust the spring lock so that it would not fasten, and thus shut him out when he got back, some one passed by quickly on the sidewalk who said "good-night." Will did not see the party, for his back was turned at the moment, but he fancied the person was first going to stop, and then suddenly changed his or her mind and hurried on with the apologetically uttered "good-night." Something dropped from the person's pocket and fell to the sidewalk through inadvertence, and the owner, in his hurry, did not notice it. But Will's ears caught the sound, and after he answered "good-night," he hastened to fix the door so that he might call the individual back. But his hands were engaged, and he was holding a package with his teeth.

When he stepped down from the door, the person who had just hurried by was so far up the sidewalk that Will could not tell whether it was a man or a woman.

"Too far away to call him. I will have to find the owner later," muttered Will, and he hastened to search for the article he had heard drop. He had not much time to spare, it was about ten minutes to nine, and he had a little distance to go on his errand.

But the search did not detain him long. There was the article lying in the middle of the sidewalk, where the first one coming along would have been likely to find it.

"Whew! In luck!" muttered Will, facetiously, and he shoved it into an inside pocket of his vest and started down the street. When he got past the office he broke into a run.

The thing he had just found was a purse, apparently pretty well filled, though he did not take time to open it. It had a steel clasp and a rim of steel, which, with its weight, accounted for the sound it had made when it struck the sidewalk.

It was not the only thing Will found that night and put in his pocket to await a chance to find an owner, as we shall see.

When he reached the railway station he searched about for the man he had expected to meet, and, not seeing him, began to pace up and down the platform, so that he might easily be sighted when the fellow should arrive.

Suddenly he stopped and picked up an article which had given forth a sharp, metallic ring when his foot happened to strike it. After a vain attempt to make out



what it could be, he put it in his coat pocket, and continued his promenade.

The nine o'clock bell rang.

About fifteen minutes before this the man whom he was now looking for had come to the end of his patience, after a short walk up and down the same platform. With a muttered curse he had crossed the yard and adjacent street, and entered a saloon for a drink. The drink had caused him to emerge rather precipitately and stride down the street toward the bank.

Some few minutes later the nine o'clock bell rang. The man suddenly realized that his battered old watch was over a quarter of an hour out. He had made a bad mistake.

He ran now, as fast as he could, his movements being stealthy, as they always were. He wore a peaked cap.

\* \* \* \* \*

Several people in Clairville will long remember the ringing of the nine o'clock bell on the night of June 21st. It tolled as if purposely to mark what had preceded it only by a second or so.

Steve Ewart, as we know, had just stopped short in front of the dark archway on hearing the startling sound of a pistol shot. While the bell was still ringing, a man ran across the road toward him, crying out:

"What's up, Steve? What's the matter?"

It was the night watchman of the village, Con Murphy.

"I don't know," replied Steve, looking round like one dazed. "Where did that report come from?"

"Sounded like in the office, didn't it?"

Immediately Steve thought of the late quarrel, Longstaff's anger, and Bob Barton's threat, although Bob had come out ahead of him.

"Let us go in and see," he said, quickly, and the two ran into the office together.

All was right there, Longstaff had not returned from the back room, but the clerks were just paying the last of the men. Some had not heard the shot. Others had heard it without attaching importance to it. With these Steve and Murphy discussed the matter for a few moments, asserting their opinion that something was wrong.

"Look in the back room, Langly," said Steve. "There's been an accident somewhere near."

"The bookkeeper hurried into the inner room, and was quickly out again.

"No one there," he said. "Mr. Longstaff must have gone out by the South Street door."

"Come, Murphy," said Steve.

The two went out onto the sidewalk again.

"Hello! It's yonder," cried the watchman, pointing to the door of the bank, where the figures of several men could be seen.

They hurried up to the door, and saw Longstaff and Mr. Pettit just going into the bank, followed by the two village constables or policemen, Hay and Dent, while on the sidewalk stood two or three simple villagers who were afraid to go in with the two great managers there.

Steve followed the others in, and saw what followed (which will appear in detail later). He remained about five minutes, watching and listening like one dazed. It all seemed like a dream.

He saw Longstaff take the policeman aside and whisper to them, and he caught some words that fairly chilled him

to the marrow, though even then he did not grasp their full significance.

The words, "The station, I think. Quick, before he gets away. The nine-ten train. Run," roused him to action.

Scarcely knowing why he acted so, he followed Hay and Dent outside, and rushed toward the station in pursuit of them. They were obeying a whispered order of Longstaff's. He had a vague and shadowy notion of what it was. It grew more distinct as he ran. He saw them draw their batons.

It was not far to the station. When the platform was gained, there was young Will Ewart walking up and down, and looking about him in an apparently nervous sort of way. The moment he saw the men coming toward him he displayed a lively interest; stopped, looked ahead, advanced a step, stopped again, and suddenly turning, ran at full speed down the platform and disappeared round the corner of the building. The dim light, or rather the semi-darkness, had the effect of imparting to his actions the very worst complexion possible.

"Good heavens! What does it mean?" cried Steve, in amazement and fear, having arrived in time within a distance that enabled him to see his brother fleeing. He at once increased his pace with the hope of soon catching up with the officers, who now, too, were just disappearing round the corner.

When he himself got to the corner, he saw that one of the officers had halted a moment at the end of the side platform to speak to a lady standing there. He heard him say to her, "I will, madam. Certainly," and saw him run on again to catch up with his brother officer, who was still in pursuit of Will. The latter was now fleeing like a hunted deer, apparently running blindly, with ultimate escape from arrest his only aim and purpose.

With a pang shooting through his heart, Steve followed, pausing only long enough, from a chivalrous impulse, to stammer forth a confused apology to the lady, whom he almost ran against in his excitement and hurry. Short as was the pause, he could not help noticing—for the mind grasps details with amazing quickness at such times—that she was young and of quite remarkable beauty, and that, as the station light showed, she was fashionably attired, and wore a handsome and becoming green hat trimmed with chiffon. She went completely out of his mind the next moment, for he was absorbed in Will's difficulty, but he afterward recalled her with the same distinctness.

The chase kept up till Mrs. Ewart's house was reached, the instinct of home, the strongest in his nature, seeming to guide the fugitive. He opened the front door and rushed in, with the two constables almost at his heels.

"Good heavens! Poor mother!" thought Steve, and with his mind equally controlled by tenderness and fear, he ran at the very maximum of his speed till he arrived at the house.

When he opened the door, he was met by a sight that staggered him. There was his mother, lying back in a low chair where she had swooned from terror. There was Will, his young brother, standing in the middle of the floor with pale face and staring eyes, his wrists locked together with handcuffs, his shoulders in the grasp of the rough hands of the officers.

He had been arrested.



"Good heavens! What is this for?" cried Steve, as he rushed in.

"For murder," answered one of the officers. "He has just committed murder and robbed the bank."

Steve staggered back with a pitiful cry of horror. Then, as his brother was led out, he dropped on his knees beside his senseless mother.

## CHAPTER V.

Let us take a glance at the doings of certain other people, as well as of some we are already acquainted with, between the hours of eight and nine o'clock, June 21st.

It was about twenty minutes past eight when young Patterson left the bank. He hurried to the Royal Arms Hotel, where he boarded, ran up to his room, and in a twinkling changed his dress suit for another. He came down and out by the ladies' stairway and exit, slipped round to a shed, leaped onto his bicycle and went whirling away in the darkness. He was the swiftest wheelman in town. He crossed the railroad track, and there before him lay a fine piece of road that he knew well, having often timed his efforts on it.

It was not long till he was flying back across the railroad track again, his profuse perspiration showing that he had been tuned up to "concert pitch," as it were, in the interval. A quick wash in his room was followed by an astonishingly hurried dressing—that is to say, it would have astonished anyone accustomed to watching him don his evening dress before a mirror. It certainly would have surprised Will Ewart. At about a quarter to nine Patterson set out to see, by appointment, his friend, Walter Fulljames.

Fulljames occupied two rooms on the top or third story of the Trevalyn Bank Building. Directly underneath his rooms were Lawyer Kemp's two private offices on the second floor, and directly underneath them were the bank inner office, part of the archway and a small part of the bank front office. To get to Fulljames' rooms you mounted an outside stairway on South Street, which brought you to the second floor. Here you entered upon a long hall with rooms on each side. At the end of the hall you found a stairway which led you up to Fulljames' sitting room.

When Patterson arrived in Fulljames' sitting room he found a friend there, young Dick Cressy, also attired in evening dress. The three talked for a minute or so about a ball they were to attend that night.

"Come, Fulljames," said Patterson, at last, "are you not ready? You always keep us fellows waiting."

"I'll dress in five minutes, if you'll excuse me," said Fulljames, yawning languidly as he rose from an easy-chair. He was attired in a long dressing gown. "Amuse yourself for a jiffy," he added, and he stepped into the adjoining room and closed the door.

"Cressy," said Patterson, rising, "I'm going to run down to the Royal Arms for a moment. I have forgotten something. Tell Fulljames I'll not keep you waiting."

"I'll wait," cried Fulljames, in the inner room. "There's no great hurry, anyhow. It's only five minutes to nine. I say, Cressy, what time are you?" He could be heard moving around in the bedroom.

"Just five minutes to nine," replied Cressy, looking at his watch.

"See if my clock on the mantelpiece out there is all right," called out Fulljames again.

Patterson had already gone out into the hall. His footsteps could be heard on the stairs.

"Your clock is just right, Walter," said Cressy. Cressy now picked up a sporting paper from his friend's table and glanced over it.

The minutes rolled slowly away. Cressy was becoming impatient. "Hurry up there, Fulljames," he cried, and then he yawned a couple of times.

He looked at the clock. It was on the point of striking nine. He turned to the paper again.

Suddenly he was startled by a loud pistol shot.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed, rising, his shattered nerves all trembling.

"I wonder what that was, Cressy," said Fulljames, opening his bedroom door and putting out his head. He seemed even more excited than the other young man. "But I suppose it's nothing. Some one shooting for fun," he added, and went back into the room, closing the door after him.

The nine o'clock bell was ringing while he spoke. Cressy went to one of the windows of the room and tried to raise it to look out, but it was fastened tight. He ran the blind up in order to see what prevented the window from moving, but in the quick survey he made he could find nothing.

"Hark!" he said to himself. He thought for a moment he heard voices. He thought, too, he saw a moving shadow between him and the opening on South Street. The blind had run all the way up. He put his face closer to the window, but owing to the strong light of Fulljames' chandelier he could see nothing but the shadow of the things in the room behind him.

The nine o'clock bell ceased ringing. Cressy sat down and pondered over the matter for some time. He called to Fulljames to hurry up, but the latter evidently did not hear him, for he returned no answer. "It was my own shadow I saw," thought Cressy.

By and by Patterson came bounding up the stairs and into the room.

"Did you hear that shot, Cressy?" he cried, excitedly. "I was just entering the hall. I went back to look out. It sounded in the building, didn't it?"

"No; outside, I think," said a voice behind them. "You must remember we're on the third story here. Our ears are easily deceived."

The speaker was Fulljames, who had just stepped forth from his room fully dressed, even to his hat and gloves, which he was buttoning.

He was very pale and his hands were trembling, but his companions, being themselves excited, particularly Patterson, did not seem to remark it.

He linked his arm in Cressy's and the two, followed by Patterson, made their way out onto the street. They walked rapidly toward the place where the ball was to be given.

## THE DETAILS OF THE DISCOVERY.

At the bank door Pettit met Longstaff. The latter was wildly excited. He had opened the door and had been, apparently, just about to go in.



"Good heavens, Pettit! I just heard a shot," he cried. "I was at the corner yonder. It came from here, I'm sure. The inner door is—— It's locked, I suppose, isn't it? Have you a key?"

The policemen were beside them and a couple of village loungers, having heard the words, were crossing the street toward them.

"Good gracious! Is it possible?" exclaimed Mr. Pettit. "Let us go in and see."

Steve Ewart and Murphy, as we know, arrived from the office in time to follow them in. The front room of the bank was lighted, just as Will had left it.

Longstaff showed great excitement and impatience while Mr. Pettit was fumbling in his pocket for the key.

"Quick, Pettit!" he cried. "I'm almost sure he went into the room. I heard so."

"Who?"

"Mr. Trevalyn!" Longstaff then called aloud. "Mr. Trevalyn!" No response. "Heavens, Pettit, hurry! Hark! Hear that? Mercy on us, he's there! Didn't you hear?"

There was a deep groan in the inner room—the sound of a dying man without doubt.

Pettit unlocked the door amid exclamations on the part of those around him.

All was darkness within. Some one had turned off the electric lights.

Mr. Pettit pressed a little lever at the side of the door and immediately four electric lamps flashed up and illumined the room.

Entering, they saw an awful sight.

There, stretched out on his back on the floor, with a little pool of blood beside him, lay Mr. Trevalyn—dead. He had just breathed his last. He had clung to life till the very moment they had begun to unlock the door. It had been his expiring groan they heard.

He had been murdered.

The five men who just entered were staggered. They looked at one another with horror-stricken faces, and then gazed about the room, taking mental notes of its condition.

"Don't touch a thing, men," said Longstaff, breaking the first solemn silence. "Leave everything as it is. Mercy alive! Look there! The vault!" and he rushed excitedly into it, and within a second or two came rushing out again, wringing his hands and crying: "No; you go in, Pettit. It's your place."

The three vault doors were open, and so was the door of the safe inside.

Mr. Pettit sprang across the room, entered the vault, and, a moment later, rushing out, cried:

"Robbed! The diamond is gone, and also a quantity of money!"

It was now that Longstaff whispered to the policemen, after casting a wicked glance at Steve.

We know how Hay and Dent obeyed his directions, and how Steve followed them out and to the station, and how Will was arrested.

When the three were gone, Murphy, Longstaff and Pettit continued looking about the room for a few moments, and then Longstaff said:

"Murphy, you stay here with Mr. Pettit till I go and give the alarm. Touch nothing. Don't stir even a paper on the floor till the coroner and doctor have come and

examined the room and the body. Mr. Pettit, you will, of course, take charge of the room. I will have the coroner here in five minutes. When he has finished you had better lock and seal the door and guard the key. This is terrible—frightful! My poor employer and friend!"

Longstaff seemed really heartbroken. He was anxious to get out in the air. He hurried out, dropped a word to the gaping crowd, and from that the news spread like wildfire.

In a few moments the coroner, doctor and a couple of other prominent men arrived. The authorities took charge and the precautions suggested by Longstaff were taken, pending the inquest.

No weapon was found, yet everything tended to prove the shooting had been done within the room.

Meantime, at Mrs. Ewart's house, Steve was trying to comfort his mother, whom he had revived and laid on a sofa.

"Mother, dear," said he, "don't be alarmed. As Will went out of the door he cried out that he was innocent. I know it is so. He could not have committed such a crime. Cheer up, mother. It's all a mistake that will soon be righted."

## CHAPTER VI.

The murder of Mr. Trevalyn, with the arrest of the young bank clerk on suspicion, threw the village and country into a state of excitement that baffles all attempts at description.

The arrest of young Will Ewart staggered nearly everyone that knew him. Few could believe him guilty. The full evidence against him was not yet known.

Mrs. Ewart was prostrated by the blow. Steve sat up all night consoling her, and in the morning took her to the house of a kind neighbor, a Mrs. Whittaker, so that he could attend the inquest.

When taking leave of his mother, Steve said:

"Now, mother, dear, listen to me. Will's arrest is a mere matter of form. Some one has to be arrested in a case like this. The inquest will clear him and he'll be home to dinner. You know it is nonsense that Will could be guilty. It is simply that he happened to see poor Mr. Trevalyn last, and the law usually—in such cases—There, mother, dear," and he kissed her and hurried away to hide the tears that were threatening to betray his half-broken heart.

The inquest opened in the town hall at ten o'clock. The jury had viewed the body and examined the scene of the murder, the inner room of the bank.

Steve had secured a lawyer for Will, a friend of his, a bright young fellow named Edward Tuckett, and the latter was now present.

Will looked very pale, as if he were frightened; seeing which, Steve contrived to convey encouraging glances to him that as much as said:

"Cheer up, Will. It's all a ghastly mistake. Your release will come presently. This is a mere formality."

After a few preliminaries—the usual formal questions and answers in such cases—the real work of the inquest began.

A hush fell on the little assemblage as the village doctor was called.



He gave his evidence succinctly. Death, he said, had been due to a bullet wound in the right breast. It had been fired from a position extremely close, when deceased had been slightly stooping, or possibly leaning over his desk. The weapon used was a pistol, he thought.

From the direction the ball entered and traveled it was, in his opinion, a physical impossibility that deceased could have inflicted the wound himself.

Mr. Pettit, the bank manager, on being sworn, detailed the events with which the reader is already familiar, and then said:

"It could not have been a case of suicide, for, after a thorough search, we found no weapon in the room. When the assassin made his escape he took it with him—most likely an old-fashioned pistol.

Question by a juror: "Could deceased have come to his death by a shot fired through one of the windows?"

"No," replied witness. "When I and others entered the windows were closed and locked on the inside. The upper half of one was lowered about two inches from the top, but I am certain the shot was not fired through there. Moreover, things were strewn about the room, showing that a struggle had taken place, and the safe was robbed. The windows are frosted almost to the top. Again, there was much smoke in the room when we entered. I smelled the powder even before I turned on the lights, and then I plainly saw the smoke. This, I believe, was due to a pistol having been fired in the room."

"How, then, could the assassin have got in?"

"I don't know. How he entered and left is to me a mystery. The door fastens with a spring lock, also a lock turned by a key. From the outside a key will turn both. We found both locked and the key was in Mr. Trevalyn's pocket. He possessed one key and I the other?"

Longstaff was called. He corroborated last witness and added that before he started toward the bank, from his office, he saw young Will Ewart running rapidly away from it, carrying something in his hand.

Sensation in the room.

By a juror: "Was that before or after you heard the shot?"

Longstaff hesitated a moment and Steve Ewart watched him like a cat watching a mouse. He knew that man hated his brother, Will, cordially.

"I think it was after the shot," said Longstaff at length, with apparent candor, "but I would not be absolutely certain; for when I first heard the report I thought no more of it than when I first saw Ewart running. On second thought I feel certain that I heard the shot first and saw Ewart running a few minutes later."

Steve saw his brother start, turn pale, and eye Longstaff with knitted brows, after which he whispered to his lawyer.

Steve sat bolt upright. Like a flash the conviction seized him that Longstaff was lying and deliberately trying to fasten guilt upon the prisoner. What was he doing this for? Was it hatred alone? It frightened Steve.

In reply to a question from the coroner, Longstaff detailed his movements at the time. He was in his office, he said, overseeing his clerks paying the men till about ten minutes, or, maybe, eight minutes to nine.

"That's right so far," thought Steve, who was drinking in every word.

"I went into my back office," continued Longstaff, "and,

after staying there a little while, stepped out on to South Street. I stood still on the sidewalk, looking around to see what kind of night it was, when all at once I saw—I mean I heard—that is, after I had stood a moment I heard a pistol shot. I started toward the corner of the office to turn on to Main Street——"

"A lie, by thunder," thought Steve, "for I was at the archway when the shot was fired and would have met him if he came there and would have seen Will running, too."

Steve clinched his fists and sat rigid in his chair, like a lion about to pounce upon his prey.

Longstaff happened to glance at Steve here and saw the fire of battle in his eyes.

"But," he continued, "I stopped to listen before reaching the corner of Main Street and, while I was standing there, I saw young Ewart running away."

Steve's heart sank.

"Ah! it was when the watchman and I entered the office," he muttered. "Longstaff may be telling the truth, after all. While Murphy and I were in the office, Longstaff may have passed one way and Will the other."

Longstaff continued: "After young Ewart ran away I passed the office, where I fancy I saw Stephen Ewart—was this a hazard?—and went on to the bank. I did not know the front door was unlocked. I just happened to try it as Mr. Pettit approached. The rest I have described."

Longstaff was retired, and one of the officers who made the arrest, Benjamin Dent, was called and sworn.

He described the chase from the station to the Ewart house and dwelt on the prisoner's apparent nervousness, suspicious actions and evident desire not to be captured, and then he told of the arrest.

"We found these things on the prisoner's person," he said, holding up a package and a steel instrument of peculiar shape and design.

Steve looked up suddenly like one who had just received an electric shock. He had not seen or heard of these things before. A strange pain tightened on his heartstrings.

"You found them on the person of the prisoner, eh? What are they?" asked the judge.

"One is a package of Trevalyn bank bills," said the witness; "the other is a well-known burglar's tool for opening safes."

"Good God!" cried Steve aloud, starting to his feet in horror; and then, as Tuckett whispered to him, he sat down with all eyes in the room on him.

There was the greatest sensation in the room.

The prisoner himself was now called.

He was pale and trembling, and in evident agony of mind. He looked helplessly toward Steve, who by this time was almost as helpless as himself, and then clutched at the railing for support.

In answer to a question, he said:

"I do not know if it is a burglar's tool. I found it at the station."

"Where did you get the money?" was asked. "Mr. Trevalyn gave it to me," was the reply.

"Will you tell us how he came to give it to you, and why you went to the station?" the coroner asked.

Will's answer staggered all who heard it.

"No," he said, with firmness, "I can tell you nothing.



I can answer no more questions regarding it." He staggered back against the railing, his face haggard and white.

"Ah, merciful Heaven, poor mother!" gasped the horrified Steve, and, leaning his head on his arms on the back of his chair, he sobbed like a child, while the greatest sensation prevailed throughout the room.

## CHAPTER VII.

A true bill was found against young Will Ewart for the murder of Mr. Trevalyn, and he was committed to stand his trial at the next assizes, set for July 17th.

He was taken away from Clairville by an armed escort that very day and lodged in the county jail at Brampton.

The effect of the blow on Steve and his mother can readily be imagined.

The next day Steve, accompanied by his lawyer, went to Brampton to see his brother. The two had no difficulty in getting permission to enter the jail, and were at once conducted to Will's cell by the warden himself and two turnkeys.

"Oh, Steve! Steve!" was the lad's simple cry, as he threw his arms around the neck of his big athletic brother and tried to choke back the rising sobs. "Oh, Steve! it will kill poor mother."

"Mother" was the word uppermost in the thoughts and sentences of the two brothers for the next five minutes.

"Oh, Steve! how did she bear it; does she still suffer? Is she terrified? Is she hopeless? I prayed for her all night. I—I could not sleep. Tell me, does—does she think me guilty, Steve? Oh, tell me that!"

"Guilty? Guilty, Will? Do you hear that, Tuckett?" Steve paused and broke into a little laugh—pathetic from the very nature of the situation, for he could not forget the package of bills and the burglars' tool. "Nonsense, Will! Talk sense. Did you hear him, Ned, eh? Guilty! Humph!" and he laughed again.

This was just the mental tonic Will needed. He dried his eyes and smilingly said:

"If it wasn't for poor mother, Steve, I'd look on this as a jolly lark, for you know it is funny to get arrested when you're not guilty, isn't it, eh? I'm glad you and mother don't think me guilty, Steve; for I know things look black against me."

"Just so," said Steve, "and that's what Mr. Tuckett and I are here for. We want you to explain all, so that we can clear you."

Will explained how he found the burglar's jimmy on the station platform, but he would not tell why Mr. Trevalyn had given him the money, or what he had been going to do with it when the policeman found him.

"Why don't you tell?" asked the lawyer.

"Because I promised poor Mr. Trevalyn I would not," was the answer; "I promised to keep the errand secret."

"Ah!" exclaimed the other two, their eyes meeting.

"No use asking me, Steve," the lad continued, seeing his brother about to speak. "I promised Mr. Trevalyn to keep secret certain things he intrusted to me, and not even to save my life will I break the promise."

The two older men again exchanged glances, in which might be read admiration of the youth.

"But tell us this," said Steve, in a low whisper, "why

did you run away from the station in the manner you did when you saw the police coming? I saw you myself. Why did you act so furtively? It will assist us to help you."

"Well, because I did not want the police or any one else to see me meeting the man that Mr. Trev—" he stopped short. "Ah, I mustn't tell that. Don't ask me any more, Steve. Oh, please don't tempt me."

He cried the last aloud and, throwing himself on the low iron bed in the corner of his cell, covered his face with his hands and groaned in despair.

Again the other two exchanged glances.

"Will," said the lawyer, quietly, "is there anything else you can tell us—anything at all?"

Will suddenly leaped off the bed.

"Yes," he broke out, his cheeks aflame with anger, "and it's this: That scoundrel Longstaff lied twice at the inquest!"

"Ah!"

"In the first place, I did not leave after the shot was fired. I heard no shot and Mr. Trevalyn was alive when I left. Longstaff lied. I remember clearly I was at the station when the nine-o'clock bell rang."

"Thank God!" murmured Steve, his face instantly brightening up.

"You didn't doubt me, did you, Steve?" cried Will, starting up with cheeks reddening and lips trembling.

"No, no, lad; go on. I didn't mean that. Go on. What was Longstaff's second lie?"

"He said he saw me. He didn't. Some one has told him. He was not on the street near the corner of the office when I passed."

"What! Are you sure of this, Will?"

"I'll swear it. I particularly noticed there was no one in sight on either South or Main Street as I passed by. Why, it was fully ten minutes to nine when I started. And, oh, Steve, I remember now! I saw you through the open office window talking to old Simon Cobb when I passed, weren't you?"

"You're right, Will; you're right. Thank God!" cried Steve, and he sprang from his chair and gripped his brother's hands, squeezing them like a vise, while he looked up at Tuckett and gave him a meaning smile.

Will now told about Patterson and Pettit leaving the bank, of the well-dressed stranger entering suddenly and inquiring for Mr. Trevalyn; of the latter's arrival; of the voice at the door; and suddenly he thought of the last incident.

"Oh, Steve, I forgot!" he cried. "The person that passed suddenly said 'good-night' and dropped a purse. Here it is! The policemen didn't find it when they searched me. I have not opened it. I didn't think it right."

He described the incident fully and gave them the purse, just as the warden said "Time's up." They bade him keep up his courage till the day of the trial, chatted with him a little longer and then, bidding him good-by, came away. They were silent till their buggy was half a mile outside of Brampton. Then suddenly—

"Steve," said Tuckett.

"Well, Ned?" said the other. His face was grave. "Your brother's danger is greater than I thought. First, his own nobility of soul hurts his chances. Just imagine: A young fellow with his life in danger, unwilling to be—



tray a secret—unwilling to break a promise, though it would clear him! And imagine, too, a youth that would not open the purse because he foolishly thinks it wrong to do so."

"Yes," said Steve, quietly. In his heart he was proud of Will. He knew the motive for not opening the purse. It was because Will was already suspected.

"But the danger," continued Tuckett. "I tell you, Steve, it is great. What Will tells us proves that he has villainy to fight against as well as unlucky circumstances."

"You're right, Ned. What Will says shows me that Longstaff was still in his office when Will passed, because he was there when Simon Cobb and I were near the window. You know what that means?"

"Yes; that Longstaff had some one watching outside for him; some one who was concealed and who told him of Will's running away."

"Exactly. And now what was that person watching for? Why had Longstaff placed him outside? What was he expecting? For it was certainly not Will's running away. That's what we've got to find out. It looks suspicious, Ned, doesn't it?"

"Yes, and dangerous for your brother. It seems to me now that there will be a secret mysterious and powerful influence working to convict Will, so that others—the guilty ones—may go free. Isn't that what you think, Steve?"

"Yes, I see the danger, and it's awful. We have only three weeks to work to save him. It will be a race against time."

"Yes, three weeks to collect evidence to——"

"Ned, I will devote that time to ferreting out and destroying the infernal plot—to clearing the mystery—to finding the guilty in order to rescue Will."

The purse contained one hundred and ten dollars in money, an unpunched railway ticket and a sheet of paper with some words written on it. Steve and Tuckett read the words and then looked at each other.

"A clew!" they whispered, simultaneously.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Steve set to work. The day after Mr. Trevalyn's funeral he called upon Mr. Pettit, and by dint of hard coaxing, got him to allow him to examine the inner room of the bank.

"It's supposed to be kept locked till the government detective arrives," said the manager, "but for the sake of your brother, Will, whom you are trying to save, I'll let you go in. It must be a secret visit, however, and I must accompany you."

Late that night the two went into the bank, locked the front door after them, groped their way through the darkness to the inner door and, after some difficulty in finding the keyhole, opened the door and passed in. Having locked the door, they turned on the electric light. Immediately Steve uttered an exclamation.

"What's the matter?" asked the manager, showing surprise. "Has anyone been in here since the night the murder was discovered?" asked Steve.

"Positively no one," said Mr. Pettit. "The body was taken out that night and the bloodstains were removed

under my supervision, and since then no one has been in. Why do you ask?"

"Did anyone touch the walls that night, or that table, or those shelves or move the chairs?"

"No. I was here from first to last, watching every movement, and nothing was interfered with but one spot on the floor, a space two feet square. Not a paper, book, chair, or anything else was disturbed. Why, what's the matter?"

"Someone's been in here, that's all. That shelf in front of the desk, and the books and papers on it, have been tampered with. That chair was not there the night of the murder."

"Nonsense, Ewart. How could anyone get in? See, the windows are locked."

"That's a mystery, but the chief mystery is what did they come in for? Even those papers scattered on the floor have been disturbed and——Ha!"

Steve uttered the exclamation under his breath. When Mr. Pettit was not looking, he stepped quickly forward and picked up a little shining object that lay on the floor, half concealed by a sheet of paper. He glanced at it and put it in his pocket without being observed.

It was a cuff button with a gold link attached to it. The button itself was of gold, and had in the center a little spot of pearl. It was of odd style.

"Where have I seen that before?" thought Steve. "Some one I have met wears a pair like it, I'd swear. Of course, it may have been dropped since the murder, but——"

"Anything else, Ewart?"

"That'll do, Mr. Pettit. Thanks." He took another glance at the shelf in front of the desk, while Mr. Pettit waited at the door for him.

They turned off the lights, stepped out into the front room and locked the door after them.

They were groping their way toward the outer door, when they were startled by a loud tapping on one of the front windows.

"Hark!" said Mr. Pettit, timidly.

"Give me the key," whispered Steve.

He unlocked the front door and stepped out quickly. Mr. Pettit followed cautiously.

"Pardon, me gentlemen," said an exceedingly pleasant voice, and immediately the tall form of a man appeared on the sidewalk almost beside them. "I tapped on the window to call you. I thought there must be someone in here."

"What's the matter?" asked Steve, approaching close enough to note that the man was a stranger and, to all appearances, a gentleman.

"As I was passing just now I saw a rough-looking man trying to peer in at the window and acting altogether in a suspicious manner. I thought it my duty to tell you gentlemen."

"Thanks," said Steve. "Did you know him?"

"Oh, no. I am a stranger here myself. I had just stepped out of 'The Royal Arms' to take a walk. I noticed the man's suspicious actions at the window here. He appeared to be watching you—probably saw you go in. I think I frightened him away. He just ran around the building as you came out, and——"

"Where? Which way?" asked Steve. He was just about to hurry away when Mr. Pettit whispered: "Wait,



Ewart," and then thanked the stranger very warmly for his kindness. The latter courteously lifted his hat, said good-night, and walked off down the street swinging his cane.

"Who is he?" asked Steve, impressed, as his brother Will had been, with the pleasant voice, the air of good breeding and the rich southern accent.

"I don't know," replied Mr. Pettit. "I have seen him somewhere before—ah, I fancy it is that Mr. Poynter staying at 'The Royal Arms.'"

"Hark! Look! Look there! See that fellow creeping stealthily toward the corner yonder. He just moved when he saw us. It's the man he spoke of. By Jove! I'm going to follow him. Good-night, Mr. Pettit. Thanks!"

Before the manager of the bank could return a "good-night," Steve had shot off like a stone discharged from a catapult. He flew to the corner of the Trevalyn office and, seeing the man making rapidly toward the railroad track, set out to follow him.

There was just light enough dimly to see him at the distance he was in advance—perhaps thirty yards. He appeared to look back at Steve a couple of times, as if he suspected he was being followed. Anyhow he increased his pace, and at last broke into a run. He wore a peaked cap.

"Ah, that's suspicious," thought Steve. "I'll catch that fellow if I have to run all night. Will's life is too precious to let so likely a clew slip."

The strange man reached the railroad track, looked back over his shoulder and then bounded on across the track and down the country road toward O'Hara's big bush. He ran with his head well down, as if he were trying to disguise his figure and, in spite of that, and the fact that he had been described as low-set, he looked fairly tall, if anything above the average height. He twice turned and looked back and then went on again at an increased speed.

All this made Steve more determined to overtake him. He felt he was following a good clew. He believed he could catch the fellow before he got to O'Hara's bush.

But he didn't. O'Hara's bush was reached, and there the stranger climbed a fence somewhat awkwardly, and, picking himself up after a fall, dived headlong into the thickest part of the bush.

Steve shouted at him to stop, vaulted the fence lightly and plunged in among the trees after him. He was obliged to stop to listen, having lost sight of him, because it was so dark that he could not see ten yards ahead. He heard no sound. The man had cunningly come to a halt, in order to conceal his location.

"Confound it, I must have lost him," muttered Steve. "Will's life may be hanging on this very man." He ran madly forward again.

Again he stopped to listen. There was dead silence. He was in the thickest part of the bush, where the darkness was intense.

Presently he was startled by hearing voices in whispered conversation, only a few feet away from him. One sentence was spoken half aloud, and it increased his nervousness; the unseen speaker saying: "Catch him? Certainly, we've got to. Come on!"

Footsteps from two sides began to approach.

Steve stood still with heart beating fast, awaiting a struggle.

## CHAPTER IX.

Steve stood behind a tree and listened to the footsteps drawing closer to him. In a few seconds they were within half a dozen yards of his hiding place, yet he could not see anyone. He could only judge there were three persons from the sounds they made and from their voices a few moments before.

He experienced considerable nervousness, not only on account of the obvious danger of his situation, but also because it seemed to be connected, in some way, with Will's trouble. The man must have had some motive in prying about the bank, and here now he was in the bush and others with him.

"Stop. Hark!" whispered one.

Steve could hear their deep breathing as they stood, listening, trying to make out where he had gone. They were almost beside him—so close, in fact, that he dared not look out from behind the tree.

"Who are they? Can they possibly be connected with the crime?" he asked himself. "If so, I'd prefer to stay here and face dangers all night in order to learn something rather than to make my escape."

The men moved around a bit and came close enough for Steve dimly to see them, but they did not see him. They came to a stop again, and one of them said:

"I don't believe he came in here, Basset. I think he's gone."

Basset! Steve resolved to stow that name away in the inner vaults of his memory. He might want to recall it some time. It was Basset, presumably, that he had just pursued from the village.

"Hush! Not so loud," returned the individual addressed as Basset. "I'm sure he crossed the fence. I'm almost sure he's come this far."

Another protracted search, and then a second silence was broken by the deepest and most powerful voice Steve remembered ever to have heard. It was the voice of the third man of the party, who up to now had been silent. It spoke in a whisper, and yet was as loud as the voices of some men in ordinary conversation.

"What did you blunder that way for, Basset?" it said, gruffly, almost savagely. "Don't you know it's dangerous? You seem to forget what happened at the bank not a century ago. The idea of acting as you did—at the front window, too, you say. Do you want to bring the police down on our heads?" There was severe reproof in the tone. The speaker continued, taking, however, a new and milder tone. "Ah, too bad," he said. "It's very unfortunate for us. It leaves us little or no chance."

Could this refer to their complicity in the murder and the robbery of the bank, and their fear of being caught? Steve asked himself. Did it mean that these men here were the guilty ones—the ones he must secure the capture and conviction of in order to save Will?

The men continued searching among the trees and bushes, but, fortunately, did not come closer to the big tree that befriended Steve.

"Say," suddenly suggested the man known as Basset. "What do you both say to skipping out at once?"

"What! And give it up, and probably get arrested on suspicion?" The sonorous voice paused a moment, then burst out explosively into utterance again: "No sir. Not yet. Not till we have— Hush!"



It sounded funny to hear such a voice say "Hush!" In his imagination Steve pictured a man of giant stature, with limbs like small Norwegian pines. He would have rushed away from the spot to avoid a probable severe thrashing but for his desire to hear something that might benefit Will's case.

"Where the deuce is he?" growled Strong Voice. "Did you know him?"

"His brother, I think—the prisoner's."

"Whew! That's bad. He's been watching."

"He was in the bank."

"What!" Such a roar was it that Steve fancied the leaves on the surrounding trees must be trembling as before the first gust of a southern gale. "What!" the invisible speaker repeated in *crescendo*. "In the bank? Great Scott! You don't say so. Do you hear that, Sassafras? Go on."

"He and another chap went in. Had a key, too."

"Oh, that's awful. Did they go all the way in?"

"Into the back room, and lit a light and stayed there ten minutes."

"Confound the luck. What if they have——?"

The great voice managed to subdue itself till it sank in an inaudible whisper. Steve strained his ears, but could not catch the important words.

What did it mean? Why was the stentorian stranger and his companions alarmed because Mr. Pettit and Steve entered the bank?

"And they had a light, Basset?" the speaker continued, in a tone of great anxiety.

"Yes. They turned on the electric light in the back room."

"Oh, murder. What will we do if—— Say?"

"What? Don't use that ugly word."

"Don't be so squeamish all of a sudden. What did they seem to be doing?"

"'Pon my word, they seemed to be looking for something, by the way the shadows moved."

"He's been at the back windows, too," thought Steve.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Strong Voice. "There's every danger. Eh, Sassafras?"

"Yes," grunted the apparent lay figure. "There's no telling what they've done. The jig may be up for all we know. Confound the luck. I suppose the room would be left locked and untouched till a government man came, but—hark! Listen. Sounds like some one out on the road there."

They became quiet and listened.

Steve was startled by what he heard almost to the point of crying out. He had to clench his hands tightly to restrain himself.

Why, here was the whole mystery solved. These men were palpably connected with the crime, else why should they take such an interest in the room where the murder and robbery were committed?

Hold! What was there still to interest them? What was it they feared had happened in the back room during Mr. Pettit's visit?

Steve longed to hear them talk again. He hoped they would drop some words that would enable him to save Will. He listened, leaning well out from the tree and taking a big risk of being seen.

But a new subject was claiming their interest now, at

least temporarily. After a lengthy pause one of them said:

"I'm certain I hear some one on the road."

"What if you do, Sassafras?" remarked Basset. "It couldn't be Patterson now. Alas! Never, never no more."

"Hush! Don't use names," said the stentor. "Let us get out of this and attend to that thing at once. It's a fine night."

"Ho! ho! What does this reference to Patterson imply?" thought the astonished Steve, and then he postponed deliberation on the question, seeing that the men were about to move away.

They did move away, and quite suddenly and quickly, too, but in just what direction Steve did not wait to listen.

He got to the edge of the bush, climbed over the fence, and was starting toward the village, when he heard a voice almost behind him say:

"Good-night, sir. Are you going my way? We may as well walk together, then. A fine night."

In surprise he turned and saw a gentleman sauntering slowly toward him, lightly swinging his cane.

It was the pleasant-voiced, polite stranger who had so kindly given him and Mr. Pettit the warning at the Trevalyn Bank not three-quarters of an hour before.

"I shall be pleased to walk with you, sir. Thanks, though I rarely smoke," said Steve.

## CHAPTER X.

"My name is Poynter. I have just been taking a midnight ramble. Am fond of solitary walks. What is your name, sir? May I ask?"

Steve satisfied his curiosity, little dreaming that the man had kept an eye on him daily since the afternoon he shadowed him from the Union Station, Toronto.

"Ah, you are a brother, then, of the unfortunate young man who has——"

"I am," said Steve, shortly.

They walked on for some time, side by side, toward the village, both silent; Steve wondering if, by any possibility, his present companion knew anything of the conversation that had taken place in the bush a few minutes ago, or if he had any curiosity as to what had taken Steve down there this time of the night.

"Too bad," said Mr. Poynter. "I am only a stranger here, but I heard of the tragedy—of the affair. Of course, you don't think your brother guilty?"

"I am certain he is not," replied Steve, warmly, eying the gentleman as closely as the darkness would permit. "He is the victim of a vile, deep plot, Mr. Poynter. First, circumstances injured him. Then the guilty ones contrived to throw suspicion on him to save themselves, though just how they did it I can't tell."

"Too bad. How do you suppose the deed was committed? To assume that your brother is innocent, and I feel that he is——"

"Thank you, sir."

"Makes the case very mysterious."

"It is clouded in mystery, sir. From my brother's story, he and Mr. Trevalyn were alone in the bank shortly be-



fore nine o'clock. The latter sent Will on a secret errand, which Will, true to his promise, refuses to reveal. He inadvertently let slip a few words, however, which show that he was sent to meet some man, presumably a stranger, at the station. Who that man is I'd give much to know, as I also would to know what well-dressed man called at the bank a little earlier, when Will was alone——"

Mr. Poynter coughed at this point, but said nothing.

"When Will left the bank, Mr. Trevalyn locked himself in the back room alone. The lights were lit. That was about ten minutes to nine, Will says. I know he is right, because he says when he passed the office I was talking with old Simon Cobb near the window, and so I was, and that establishes the fact that Mr. Longstaff was there, too—though he swore differently—because it was after Simon and I moved from the window that Longstaff stepped into his back office. I waited a few minutes, and then stepped out on the street and heard the shot."

"Ah! Pardon me. Do you suspect anyone?"

"Within the last hour I have been seized with a very strong suspicion, sir. (Did Mr. Poynter give a start?) But you'll pardon me—I don't care to mention it."

"You're right, Mr. Ewart. I am a gentleman of leisure and a retired lawyer. Should you need assistance in this case at any time call on me at the Royal Arms and command me. I wish to be your friend."

It was very kind of Mr. Poynter, and Steve showed his gratitude by walking all the way to his hotel with him, going considerably out of his way to do it. They were just shaking hands in the lighted lobby of the hotel, when Steve got a shock that nearly threw him off his feet. It set his heart beating so that he could scarcely return Mr. Poynter's final cordial "Good-night," and the perspiration was rolling in beads down his face by the time he got out on to the street.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed. "The cuff button I found in the back office of the bank a while ago—it's counterpart is on Mr. Poynter's sleeve this moment! I forgot to look and see if he had one missing."

So excited was Steve that he almost forgot where he was. Walter Fulljames, who was walking toward the room over the bank, stopped in passing, and said:

"Anything wrong, Ewart? Sick, eh?"

"No, I was just thinking," replied Steve.

"I'm sorry for your trouble," returned Fulljames, "but that needn't fret you. Will is just as sure to get off as—confound it, the idea of arresting Will. It's a shame, Ewart."

"You're right, Fulljames, and thank you. Will was at the station when the shot was fired, and—by the way, where were you that night? Did you hear it, Walter? I had intended to ask you, and——"

"Just so. Something always turns up when a fellow sets out to do anything. But say, Steve, old man, you look worried. Come, this won't do"—he put his hands on Steve's shoulders in a kind way. "Don't you know Will is bound to get off. They can't convict him. Cheer up."

"No, I don't think they can very well, unless there will be villainy working against him. I know he was at the station at nine. If I could only find persons to prove he could not have been at the bank when the shot was fired, or get—— Did you hear the shot, Walter? Were you——?"

"Good gracious, Steve, old chap, I declare."

"What——"

"I've just been looking in your face. Say, this won't do. Stop fretting. I tell you Will will be cleared. What you want to do is to find out if any persons saw him at the station or on the way there that night. Steve, old man, I'll tell you what I'll do for you. I'll spend the whole day to-morrow making inquiries about the village, and if I can find a witness for you I'll send you a note. That reminds me—I'm going to go this minute and see Cressy. Good-night, Steve."

"Did you hear the——?"

But Fulljames was already several yards down the street, and, although he must have known Steve had to go in the same direction, he nevertheless went striding on, almost at a run, and was presently out of sight, through the aid of the darkness and a sharp little bend in the street.

"Confound it, he forgot to answer my question," muttered Steve. "He rattles away so fast that he continually flies off at a tangent. An excitable fellow!"

Steve walked on, thinking of Poynter and the button. "How," he asked himself, "did one of Mr. Poynter's sleeve buttons come to be where I found it—in the back room of the bank? Who is Mr. Poynter? What is he doing here? Was he in the bank, and, if not, how came the button there. Good gracious, it's staggering! And—and what was Mr. Poynter doing down at the bush to-night? Great Scott! He's one of the men of the bush—he's Sassafras, perhaps. He may be the guilty man."

Excited Steve! It was he that was flying off at a tangent occasionally, and not that man of iron nerve, Walter Fulljames. When he first saw the button he knew that he had seen it before. Had he ever seen Mr. Edward Poynter before to-night?

Steve had to pass the bank on his way home.

Now, back of the bank and office building was a yard. It was bounded on two sides by high board fences, or, rather, walls—for they were higher than a man's head—about sixty feet long, and on the fourth side, by the side of another large building that faced on to South Street—the Clairville Pump Works. The yard belonged to the pump works company and not to the bank. As we know, there was no communication between the bank offices and this yard. Anyone wishing to go into the yard from the bank had first to go out onto Main Street and then turn into the archway or alleyway which led into the yard and pump works' building. The passage had not been used by teams much of late, as the pump works were temporarily closed.

Just as Steve had got past the Trevalyn office, after turning onto South Street, he heard a noise that caused him to stop short and listen. He would not have noticed it but for the hour being so late.

He stepped softly to the big board fence, and, finding a good-sized crack, looked through it into the yard between the bank and the pump factory.

What was his surprise to see a tall, dark figure crossing the yard toward the bank side of the brick building. In the darkness he could only make out that the man was tall and big.

There was no legitimate reason or excuse for anyone to be in that yard at such an hour, and Steve knew it. He continued to watch through the crack. The figure went out of sight a moment—the crack commanded but a nar-



row view—but presently reappeared and approached close to the end of the alleyway. He stood as if listening. No sound broke the stillness of the calm night. He seemed satisfied. He went close to one of the bank windows, and began slowly to climb upwards.

"Good heavens!" muttered Steve.

He stared in amazement at the strange sight.

The figure seemed to be climbing up the smooth brick wall of the building, for there was no ladder or anything else in sight. The night, to be sure, was dark. There might possibly be a ladder, but if there was, the watcher could not see it.

Steve could not restrain himself. With the thought of his brother, Will, in his mind, as well as the talk of the men in the bush, he left the crack in the fence, and stole quietly, but quickly, around onto Main Street, and arrived at the entrance to the archway. All was quiet on the street.

He paused to listen. He heard a low, dull sound. Thinking it was the man trying to raise the window, he started to grope his way down the dark alley, to take him by surprise. He stepped on a broken piece of iron hoop. The end flew up and struck the brick wall, making a sharp, metallic sound, which the hollow archway intensified and caused to reverberate.

Immediately he heard a noise within the yard, the sound of some one running.

He rushed to the end of the dark passage, and stood looking around. He could see no one at the bank windows or anywhere else. The figure he had seen through the crack had contrived to get under cover somewhere, having heard his approach—had probably got out of the yard altogether. There was no ladder in sight, either.

Steve tried a ruse. He ran noisily out through the archway and down the street. At the office corner he turned, and ran lightly on tiptoe to the crack in the board wall, where he had first seen the figure.

For some time he saw nothing. He commanded a view only of the immediate vicinity of the bank windows. His patience would have failed him but for the thought that Will's interest might be served by the discovery of who the night prowler was. He waited.

Fully five minutes passed in silence. Then Steve's ears caught a continued scraping sound, followed by a dull thud, as of some one leaping to the ground.

Ah! The figure again! Through the crack Steve saw a dark figure approaching one of the bank windows.

He did not wait to see him climb miraculously as before. He got off the sidewalk so as to make less noise, and stole quickly around to the archway.

At the entrance he paused to listen and size up the situation. Then he started down through the dark alley, groping his way cautiously, but none the less quickly than before. He reached the end of it and saw the dark figure just about to climb up at the nearer window. He made a bound forward, caught the man about the waist, and went rolling over with him to the ground.

## CHAPTER XI.

A lively struggle followed. Steve proved the stronger, and presently had the man on his back. He was congratulating himself on having captured the key to the

mystery, as he thought, when he was startled by hearing the man beneath him say:

"Hold on—there. Don't choke—me so. Stop, I say. I am Phil Trevalyn."

"What! Great Scott!"

Steve's hands dropped from the young fellow's throat, and both got to their feet, one murmuring apologies. Had it not been for the trouble of mind each was in they would have burst out laughing together.

"Well, well, well. Excuse me, like a good fellow," said Steve. "I am Steve Ewart. I was passing—I thought I saw some one entering the bank, and I acted as——"

"As a Western cyclone," finished Phil Trevalyn, half laughing. "It's on a Chicago police force you ought to be. I came down here a few minutes ago to do some detective work on my own account. I wanted to see if father's murderer could possibly have entered by one of these windows. You know I am not one of those who think that your brother murdered poor father."

"Oh, thank you," cried Steve, impulsively catching Trevalyn's hands and squeezing them.

"Let us go out," suggested Phil Trevalyn. "Tell me what you have learned. We'll work together after this—you to free your brother, I to find my father's slayer, both of us to set justice aright."

They went out through the dark archway and a little distance up the street, and there Steve made Trevalyn acquainted with most of what the reader has already learned. He felt sure he had found the man of the mysterious ladder climbing.

"Well, I declare," said Trevalyn, "there's enough ground for suspecting several people. This man, Bob Barton, who, you say, went out of the office with a threat on his lips——"

"Oh, I don't think it was he. I only mention him. There's the man Will was to have met at the station. Then the three men in the bush——"

"Yes, and likely the first man is with them; go on."

"And Poynter——"

"Do you think you might be mistaken about the cuff buttons?"

"Possibly. I intend to make sure soon, but if I find I am right, it will prove Mr. Poynter was in the bank—and in the back room. Then Patterson, whom the men mentioned."

"So far the men in the bush seem the most likely. Now, what can there still be in the bank to interest them?"

"I don't know, unless they left some traces they want to cover up. To-morrow we must search for the man Will saw in the bank and the man he was to meet."

"All right. Is there any other clew at all?"

"Yes, a purse dropped by some one who passed the bank hurriedly as Will came out." He explained all the details connected with the purse up to the time Will gave it to him and Tuckett. The latter had it now, he said.

"Ah, ha!" said Trevalyn. "Go on. Anything in the purse besides the railway ticket and the money?"

"Yes. A paper with these words, presumably in your father's handwriting: 'L. B.—I will be in the bank at nine o'clock. If you like to see me there you may come; but I give you warning, I will listen to nothing unreasonable. (Signed) M. T.' Your father's initials, aren't they? Tuckett said so. Who L. B. is, is a mystery."



"Yes—Manuel Trevalyn. Good heavens! What does it mean? Father undoubtedly wrote that note. Some one was to call on him at nine—some one having an unreasonable demand."

"Yes; Tuckett thinks if we could find the owner of the purse we would have found the man who, after Will was gone to the station, turned back, entered the bank and quarreled with and murdered your father. We have advertised in the *Clairville Times*, which appeared yesterday, for the owner of the purse. So far no owner has turned up. But L. B., whoever he is, we must find."

"I'm afraid you won't. Good gracious! That's undoubtedly the guilty party. See, he's afraid to come forward to claim his purse, which had a big sum of money in it. He prefers losing the money. It may be one of the men in the bush."

"That's what I think. I fancy the murderer, whoever he is, has some reason for wishing to get into the bank again, and that he will visit it. We'll get Murphy to watch it to-night. That's why I was so excited when I saw you climbing up by the window a while ago. By the way, Trevalyn, how did you climb the wall, anyway? I saw no ladder."

"What do you mean? I didn't climb at all."

"Didn't climb! Why man, I saw you not fifteen minutes ago climbing—you were halfway up the window. I saw you five minutes before our scuffle. You ran away."

"I did not run away. You're mistaken, Ewart. I did not lift my foot off the ground. I had just climbed the fence that instant—had barely reached the window, when you——"

"Great Scott!"

"What!"

"Come back—come to the yard, quick. Here, Murphy"—he called to the night watchman across the street—"come with us, you—good heavens."

Here was a complication. It was not Trevalyn at all who had climbed the wall.

"What do you mean?" asked Trevalyn, running after him to keep up.

"I mean that the first man I saw through the crack wasn't you at all. He escaped. There were two of you at the window. I remember now I heard you jump off the fence after I had lost sight of the first man. Come quick, and let us see if we can find him. Murphy!"

"I'm with you, avic. Softly now."

The three entered the yard behind the bank, and searched it thoroughly. They explored, as well as the darkness would allow, a little shed adjoining the pump factory, but without avail. They were just emerging from it when Murphy, in his inimitable Irish brogue, whispered:

"Whisht! Stop a bit. Somebody's been smokin' in here. Can't you perceive th' aroma of the delicious weed? Sthrike a light."

"You're right. There is a smell of tobacco here."

Murphy uncovered his dark lantern, and, sure enough, little clouds of smoke could be seen within the shed, showing that some one, quite recently, had been enjoying a pipe or cigar there.

"Look here," said Murphy, "'twas a pipe. He's been fillin' it"—he picked up some particles of tobacco from the floor. "Be the piper, he smokes the same tobacco that

I do—'Robinson's Twist'—and there's only one man in the whole of Ontario that retails it or keeps it."

"Who's that?" asked Steve and Phil Trevalyn, in a breath, both realizing on the instant that the clew was an excellent one, if Murphy was not mistaken.

"John Bollard, the tobacconist of Toronto," said Murphy. "It's a rare brand. He alone has it, and I, myself, buy from him. Yes"—smelling the particles—"that's 'Robinson's Twist' as sure as I'm a judge of the weed."

"Good. We'll note that. Murphy, keep your eye on this yard to-night," said Steve. "Come, Trevalyn."

"Say, Ewart."

"What?"

Phil Trevalyn had halted, and was now standing in the center of the yard, looking up toward the top of the building.

"Whose lights are those in the two windows, side by side, on the third floor?" he asked.

The question was put with such exactness that it was easy to see Trevalyn was noting these details as the groundwork of some vague suspicion, as if he wondered why the occupant of the third floor—such a close neighbor of the bank's people—had not been mentioned before this.

"Those are Fulljames' apartments," said Steve. "He has rented and occupied them for the last year."

Then he and Murphy, between them, explained how the rooms had no connection whatever with the bank any more than a room in the building next door—a shoe store—and how unreasonable it would be to associate Fulljames with the murder in any way any more than Lawyer Kemp, whose offices occupied the second floor.

"I am not so sure of that," returned Trevalyn, still looking up at the lighted third-floor windows, and, apparently, measuring with his eye the height from the ground. Some one has done the deed, and it appears to have been some one well acquainted with the place, who knew how to get in and out almost miraculously. What does this Fulljames do? I see he sits up late."

"He generally has company at nights. Poker games, they say. He doesn't work at anything that I know of; appears to have money."

"H'm! H'm! Poker and idleness. I must try and get acquainted with him."

"You surely don't suspect him?" exclaimed Steve, in a hushed voice; then, as Trevalyn shook his head negatively, added: "I met him a while ago. He forgot to tell me if he heard the shot that night when I asked him."

"Indeed!" said Trevalyn, dryly. "Then he'll not forget to answer when I ask him."

Presently the three went out through the archway, and, after a short chat on the street, when Murphy was again bidden to watch the place, separated with warm "Good-nights."

A great idea had flashed into Steve's mind just after he parted with Trevalyn and Murphy. He had got a queer notion or suspicion since he had heard the talk in the bush, and, late as it was in the night, he was going to put it to a test.

He hurried to the farther end of the village, where Mr. Pettit lived, and went up the shaded avenue to his house. He knew the manager of the bank usually sat up late nights, reading, and that, when he explained his motives, he would forgive his visiting him at two o'clock.

He rang the doorbell and Mr. Pettit himself answered



it. He was astonished, but he received Steve kindly, and ushered him into his library.

"Ewart," he said, "I can see by your face that you are in a hurry. What can I do for you? I know you have come on some business connected with this unfortunate affair. You know I'll do anything I can for you. Speak."

"Thank you very much, Mr. Pettit. I fear my request will rather startle you. I want you either to accompany me to the bank to-night—at once—or intrust me with the key—both keys—till morning. In short, I want to watch the bank—to pass the rest of the night in it—and none but yourself and I must know it."

"What! Do I understand you, Ewart?"

"Listen, Mr. Pettit. I have, I hope, your confidence. You trust me"—the banker nodded. "Now, there is no money in the bank, as you say, or anything of great value. If there was I'd be diffident about asking such a favor. I suspect the bank will be visited before morning—yes, sir; hear me—that it will be broken into if less violent means of obtaining ingress fail, and I want you to give me the keys and permission to use them so that I may both guard the place and carry out my own aim for poor Will's benefit. He has secret enemies, Mr. Pettit, that——"

"By George, I'll do it for your brother, for I believe the boy as innocent as I am——"

"Thank you, Mr. Pettit——"

"But not a word about——"

"I'll keep it positively secret, sir."

"There are many valuable documents and papers in the bank, Ewart—lots of them, though we gave it out otherwise—bonds, deeds, mortgages, and, by Jove! now I think of it, there are over ten thousand dollars in government securities that I forgot to——"

"I'll defend them with my life, sir," interrupted Steve.

Mr. Pettit handed him the keys. Two minutes later Steve was hurrying down the street, taking all the care he could to escape the attention of any villagers that might be out of bed so late. He even avoided the notice of Murphy, whom he passed in the vicinity of the Royal Arms. The watchman was evidently none too anxious to pass the night in the immediate vicinity of the late murder.

Steve was fated to have a night of adventures.

It was about twenty minutes past two when he quietly unlocked the front door of the bank and let himself in. There was no one to be seen on the street. All was quiet. The night was now very dark.

He locked the door on the inside, crossed the front room on tiptoe, and, after standing and listening intently a moment, proceeded to unlock the only door of the late chamber of death.

It took him some time to find the keyhole by feeling for it. He inserted the key at last, and turned it almost noiselessly. The door swung open as if of its own volition.

He stepped softly into the darkness, and for the life of him he could not repress a thrill of nervousness when the thought flashed across his mind that he was now standing on the very spot where the murdered man had lately lain.

He closed the door behind him, and the spring lock clicked so loudly that he gave a second nervous start, letting the big key of the front door fall from his hand. It sounded almost preternaturally loud, yet he scarcely heard it, the whole power of his sense of hearing being

absorbed, as it were, by the great circumambient volume of silence that seemed, somehow, to be a sound in itself.

All of a sudden he drew himself up into an attitude of listening. He looked around, trying to peer through the intense darkness, while the perspiration of dread rolled down his face. For the life of him he could not fight back the feeling that there was some one in the room besides himself.

## CHAPTER XII.

Steve, as he stepped on the spot where the murdered man had lain, felt almost certain he had heard a sound.

But, when he had stood some time absolutely still, he began to conclude it was one of those fancied sounds—the product of intense silence—that the mind involuntarily creates at such times. His eyes got more used to the darkness, and presently he was able to locate the windows by the two great oblong patches of very dim light, which in no degree modified the darkness of the room.

He stepped forward, and his foot catching under a paper, raised it, and stirring others near it, started some object rolling on the floor—some small object that had fallen into the midst of the papers and lain concealed by them.

Steve listened again, and then groped about for one of the electric light globes. He suddenly thought of the button or lever at the door. He took a couple of steps back, and his foot once more struck the small object on the floor. The impetus given to it sent it rolling away down near the vault door.

He found the lever near the doorpost, and pressed it. Lo! There came no light from it.

Some one had cut one or both of the wires to prevent the light being turned on. The cutting, no doubt, had been done outside where the wires entered the building.

When had it been done? Steve thought a moment, and then slapped his hand against his thigh.

"Good gracious! Since Mr. Pettit and I were here a couple of hours ago," he muttered, "for we then used the light."

What had it been done for?

Ah, yes. To prevent discovery in case anyone should enter while the intruders were at their work. They were going to visit the bank to-night, then. That was plain.

The conclusion did not add to Steve's comfort any.

He struck a match, and holding it far from him, waited for the flame to grow large enough to reveal to him part or the whole of the room. The little glimmer of light seemed to serve only to emphasize and intensify the surrounding darkness. One thing he did see, and it quite startled him. In the vicinity of the vault door was a flashing, gleaming, sparkling light that looked like the terrible eye of some wild animal.

He gave a second violent start, letting the match fall and burning his fingers. He heard a noise this time without a doubt. It sounded like the stealthy creeping of some one coming nearer and nearer.

A period of dead silence, most trying to the nerves, followed. Steve could not endure it. He moved quickly toward one of the windows, and putting out his hands till he touched the wall, gradually let himself down till he was



in a sitting posture on the floor with his back to the wall.

Scarcely had he seated himself when he heard the mysterious creeping noise again. It was fright-producing from the fact that it seemed to be made by one who was perfectly conscious of Steve's presence in the neighborhood and the fact that it could not be located.

By the time he had straightened himself up to listen it had stopped, thus making him more nervous. He placed himself in front of the window and reached out his hands to feel if it was fastened all right.

Heavens! What a shock he got! As he put out his hands one of them went clear through the window without touching pane or sash. He started back, barely suppressing an exclamation.

Some one had cut out one or more panes of glass in order to effect an entrance through the window. This had been done since he and young Trevalyn had left, not over an hour ago.

Steve again stepped forward, nerving himself to the task of looking out through the hole in the window. He was in the act of putting up his hands for the second time when he was startled—absolutely startled—by the same stealthy, creeping sound he had heard before, this time more distinct and quite capable of location.

He staggered back from the window, turning himself round quickly as he did so, and then he stood still, weakened by the awful shock, with the sweat of fear pouring down his face. The creeping noise had been behind him. It was now between him and the door by which he had entered. It meant there was some one in the room with him!

### CHAPTER XIII.

Steve trembled like a leaf. He expected every moment to see a flash and hear a shot. Of a sudden it occurred to him that he was made a conspicuous mark for a bullet by the great patch of faint light behind him. He leaped quickly aside, and then began to grope his way to a corner back of where the manager's desk stood.

As he moved, the man moved, not in his former stealthy and cautious manner, but quickly and with considerable noise, as if he no longer cared what Steve heard or saw, now that he was aware of his presence.

Neither spoke. They shifted about for some seconds, each apparently guiding his movements by those of the other and both being anxious to keep apart. In time, however, the stranger seemed to tire of this course. He muttered something suggestive of a curse and at once proceeded to act more boldly.

"Heavens! Who can it be?" thought Steve. "What is he doing now?"

The man had made his way to the vault and was groping about on his knees on the floor.

"The object that rolled, perhaps," thought Steve. "Good gracious! The Trevalyn diamond!" he added, as he recalled the flashing, sparkling light he had seen.

"Come out of that, you," he immediately said, in a low, firm voice, thus breaking the silence by speech for the first time.

The secret was out. On the night of the tragedy the murderer had dropped the diamond in his excitement, and

had been obliged to go off without it. He had since been trying to come back for it—to re-enter the back room without being detected.

The man grunted angrily on hearing Steve's order, and getting to his feet, hurried to the nearest window. With his head at the broken pane, he called softly to some one outside. The word "help" alone was audible to Steve.

The thought of his innocent brother being incarcerated while here were the guilty ones at large and actually repeating their offense, made Steve bold and desperate. He rushed across the floor, tripping on and falling over a heavy office rug in the darkness.

The man at the window heard his movement and turned to get ahead of him and reached the vault door first—an action that told he had not yet found what he was looking for.

But Steve got there first. To his absolute amazement he found the vault door wide open. Whoever the intruder was, he appeared to possess the secret of the combination of at least the outside door, and had used it within the last half hour. Possibly he was an expert with combination locks.

While the man was yet only halfway to the door, Steve got past it, and seizing the edge with his hand, quickly entered the vault and pulled the door shut after him. With one hand he held the door tightly shut by clinging to the big bolt that ran transversely on the inside, while with his other hand he hastily drew a match from his pocket and struck it on the brick wall of the vault.

While the flame was slowly developing he heard a noise outside. Some one was entering by the window. Presently the intruder jumped to the floor. The other man had reached the vault door, and was holding his foot against the bottom of it, while at the same time he was rummaging among some papers near by on the floor.

"He is still searching. Then he has not got it," thought Steve.

Next to the safety of his life, the diamond was at present our hero's great anxiety. With the lighted match in his hand he stooped, still clinging to the door's big bolt, and searched the floor in the front part of the vault.

"Have you got it?" he heard one of the men outside say, in an anxious voice.

"No, but I heard it roll," growled the other, and he added, as an appendix, a startling oath and blood-curdling threat of murder if he did not secure it.

"Who the deuce is he?"

"I don't know, but we'll——" The voice sank too low to be heard inside. They were referring to the occupant of the vault. They did not know Steve, it seemed, or as yet had not recognized him. Steve was now greatly puzzled, one of his theories having been wholly upset. These voices were not the voices of the men of the bush; he was almost certain of that. They talked neither like Dan nor Sassafras, and they did not even faintly suggest "Strong Voice."

Shivering with fright, Steve lit three matches, one after the other. He was now more than ever of the opinion that the diamond must have rolled into this outer compartment of the vault.

Suddenly Steve gave vent to a little gasp of delight. His eye caught a sparkle, a gleam, and then, as he stooped farther, a great flashing, dazzling light. It was the diamond!



It lay about five feet from him, under the lowest shelf, near the second door, and he would have to let go his hold on the bolt of the door to secure it—a thing he was afraid to do.

That moment he heard the men mention the vault, and felt one of them pulling on the door.

The dangerous time had come. They would certainly try to murder him, if for no other reason than to save themselves from detection and to secure the diamond.

He clung to the door bolt with all his strength, yet, with his advantage of a good hold, he saw he could not long resist the united strength of the two pulling on the little handle outside.

He dropped his fourth match, took off his cap with his right hand, and, judging the distance as well as he could in the black darkness, threw his cap toward the right-hand corner under the bottom shelf. He then pushed his foot against the shelf and shook it and gave a vigorous kick to a little pile of dust-covered papers behind him. This was all he could do to hide the diamond, and he had very little hope of its efficacy. He could not possibly gain possession of it in time.

The men had passed a thick ruler under the door handle, and with the new purchase were pulling together with all their might. Now was the time, Steve thought. It was a dangerous expedient, but it was the only one left him.

He suddenly relaxed his hold and gave the door a vigorous shove outward. He leaped out of the vault, tumbled over the two men, who had fallen on their backs on the floor, and rushed blindly through the darkness toward the door leading to the front room. He stumbled, and went bang against it.

He groped vainly about for the spring lock. He was obliged to abandon the attempt, as the men, guessing his intention, were coming to prevent his escape. He sprang to Mr. Pettit's desk, got behind it and picked up a chair.

"Back!" he cried. "Back! I have a weapon here. Don't tempt me."

The robbers stopped short in their rush, whispered together a moment, and then retreated toward the vault, tripping over the big rug.

Presently one of them began moving around between the vault and the nearest window, while the other made so little noise that Steve could not tell just where he was or what he was doing. But he guessed he had entered the vault and closed the door partly after him.

Ah! A little gleam of light under the vault door! The man inside had struck a match.

"Heavens! He'll find it," was Steve's fretful thought, and he beat his brains to think of some means of baffling the robbers.

He laid down the chair and began groping along the top and sides of Mr. Pettit's desk. No result. He seated himself in the manager's chair and let his arms reach out their natural length, still feeling about the desk, on top, below and at the sides.

Ha! He found it at last—the electric button by which, he had heard Will say, Manager Pettit could, without leaving his chair, call up the telegraph office and get them to send a messenger to the bank for a telegram. Steve pressed the button again and again.

"Seize him. We must," he now heard one of the men say, and he noted an effort to disguise the natural tone of voice.

"Come on," the other whispered, and his voice also was laboriously assumed.

They approached, stealthily at first, and then with a rush, but in the darkness did not find their victim, for he had made a noise in one place and then quickly moved away from it.

"Now!" whispered one of the men, and they began their second attempt. They approached slowly.

Steve stood waiting, with one hand on the chair and the other pressed tight against the electric button on the side of the manager's desk.

If the wire was in working order, there must surely now be an astonishing alarm ringing in the telegraph office away at the other end of the village. Would they send a messenger? They must surely know something was wrong at the Trevalyn bank.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

"He's got it sure," whispered one of the men, and then, to Steve's horror, they separated, and began to come round the desk one on each side.

Quickly, as there comes a flash of lightning, Steve snatched an object—which happened to be a heavy paper weight—off the desk, and threw it over their heads with great force; it struck the iron door of the vault with a loud crash, and fell to the floor with a dull thud.

"Ha!" he heard them both exclaim in fright, and they leaped back and then made for the windows.

His fear now was that they would escape without his gaining some clue for future identification of them. He had for some time been searching about the desk for an article that would, he hoped, enable him to carry out his second bright idea. This article was nothing less than Mr. Pettit's kodak, which he had heard Will say the manager always kept in one of the drawers of the desk. There remained but one drawer to open; the men had heard him moving the others and thought no doubt he was looking for a revolver.

They had halted at one of the windows to listen. Hearing no repetition of the great noise that had alarmed them, and having perhaps divined its origin and cause, they were becoming bold again. They started to approach.

"Back!" cried Steve. "I have found it. I will use it."

"Ewart!" gasped one of the men, whereupon the other seized his arm and whispered:

"Hush, you fool!"

"They know me," thought Steve. "Back!" he added aloud. "I have found it."

He had found the kodak, and was taking chances on its readiness for use, and also on a wild scheme of operating it that had suggested itself. He remembered striking his leg against the waste-paper basket, and in feeling about the desk he had come across a lamp. But the paper basket was on the other side of the desk, and he had first to get the men out of his way.

A couple of seconds had elapsed, and the men had approached within a few feet of him.

"Did you take that diamond off the vault shelf?" said Steve, aloud. "It was I who put it in the vault. Don't



dare to steal it." It was no lie. His foot had caused the diamond to roll where it now lay, and he was not asserting it was on the shelf. Yet he wanted their attention to go off the floor.

The ruse worked like a charm. Both men flew to the vault, forgetting all need of caution and all thought of Steve's escaping, and inside the door went both.

Steve lost not a moment. Leaning over the desk, he caught up the waste-paper basket. He felt it, found it pretty full, partly pulled out a paper through a hole in the wicker work near the bottom, and then, stooping behind the desk, proceeded to light a match under cover of his coat.

The match ignited. He touched it to the paper. The man on the watch at the vault door saw the light, and shouted to his companion. The latter, greedy for the diamond, delayed perhaps a second. But the end of two seconds both were coming out. But in that time Steve had not been idle. He touched the flame to several parts of the waste-paper basket, and then threw basket and all over the desk. It struck the floor as the men were emerging from the vault, but something else struck on top of it almost as soon.

It was the lamp which Steve had snatched from the desk and whirled on top of the burning basket of papers with such force that it broke into pieces, and the coal oil caught on the flame and the papers and caused a sort of explosion and a great and sudden conflagration and a glare of light that illuminated the room like a dozen successive lightning flashes.

The two men, who had not yet got halfway to the window, were so amazed and bewildered that for several seconds they could not comprehend the situation, but stood stock-still and dumfounded, looking at the burning mass and not even thinking of the man who had caused it.

And there was Steve with the kodak leveled on them, praying in his heart that Mr. Pettit had left it charged and ready for picture taking. He tried to see the men's faces as well, but in spite of the glare he could not; indeed, because of the glare he could not.

It is hard to tell just how long the light lasted, certainly not long, for after the first great quick glare, during which both men stood as if petrified, one of them leaped forward and covered it with an office rug which he snatched from the floor. Then he stamped on it with all his weight and the light was out.

It was a clever bit of action. Steve admired his presence of mind. He himself had avoided being seen by stooping behind the desk the moment he snapped the kodak.

Just as the light went out one of the men cried: "Hark! A noise outside!"

This was the first time Steve imagined he had heard this voice somewhere before. Where? When?

There were noises outside. They seemed to be on the street. The men took alarm, and made for the broken window.

"Quick, cover him!" said one in a whisper, and then began to climb out, having opened the window when he first came in and left it open. Steve dared not approach, for he believed the other was holding a revolver ready to shoot him. But a moment later, when this man began to climb, he stole softly forward a few steps and then made a rush with his head and shoulders stooped.

He was too late to prevent the hasty exit, though he grabbed hold of the man and caught at a portion of his clothing and watch chain. He got a vicious kick in the chest, that sent him reeling across the room half stunned, with part of the broken chain in his hand.

The men escaped. They could be heard scrambling over one of the fences outside, while in front of the building, probably at the door, there were voices calling.

"Help comes too late," thought Steve, as he staggered to his feet, and entered the vault.

He was almost too weak to light a match. But voices at the back of the building roused him, and he secured the diamond and his cap, and hurried out, putting the diamond carefully away in his pocket. Then, taking the kodak with him, he advanced to the first door, unlocked it and stood listening.

The voices were no longer in front of the bank; the parties just arrived had evidently all gone round to the back. Hark! Yes, they were at the broken window.

Steve hurried past the first door, closing it softly after him, unlocked the outer door, and a moment later was on street with both diamond and kodak in his possession, and also the piece of broken chain.

He set off at a run, turned the corner, and made for Mrs. Whittaker's, where his mother and himself intended to board for some time yet. He did not once look back.

His very first act when he got safely into his own room was to look to see if the kodak had had a prepared plate in it. If not, he would have no hope from that source; he had very little, anyhow.

Whew! Good! He was delighted. There had been a plate all ready for use. The kodak had been "loaded," as Mr. Pettit termed it. He quickly covered it up to keep out the light, and wrapping a paper about the instrument, put it away in a drawer.

He now took out the diamond. How it blazed and sparkled!

"It will help Will when I restore this to the Trevalyns to-morrow," thought Steve.

He wrapped a piece of paper around it and put it away in his vest pocket. He next examined the piece of chain. It was pure gold. To his surprise, he found a locket attached to it, a handsome and valuable gold locket. He opened this and got, perhaps, the greatest surprise of the night, for it contained a miniature portrait of a most beautiful young lady, whom, though he had seen her but a couple of times, he recognized at the first glance.

It was Miss Trevalyn!

How on earth could the burglar have become possessed of her picture, and why did he wear it in a locket on his watch chain?

## CHAPTER XV.

The next day Steve rang the doorbell of the great Trevalyn mansion, and asked to see one of the young men. They were both out, the maid said. He gave his name, and asked if he could see Miss Trevalyn. The maid came back and told him the lady was indisposed and could not see visitors. His reception was most chilly—frigid.

"Will you kindly tell Miss Trevalyn," he said, not daunted, "that I should not make so bold as to request an



interview if it were not on a matter of great importance to her family. It will admit of no delay."

The maid went off, and presently returned to conduct him to the presence of Miss Trevalyn. He was soon in the drawing room, alone with that famous beauty. She was dressed in black—in mourning for her father—and she looked pale and careworn.

"You wished to speak to me, sir?" she said, coldly, as if she were addressing the brother of the murderer of her father.

"Yes, madam," said Steve. "I have news that I think you should know." This was cunning. It was news for himself he was after. "That, I hope, will justify my reluctant, ill-timed visit. Will you kindly have patience, madam, till I first tell you my story, and then I will explain what concerns you?"

She looked astonished and somewhat displeased, yet his manner was faultless and she allowed him to proceed.

He began with an apology for calling, and then rapidly told her how Will had been a favorite of her father's, and how circumstances made him appear guilty of a fearful crime.

She was cold and unmoved.

"I don't see why you should come here to tell me this, sir," she said, haughtily.

"Madam, it is necessary to tell you this to put you in a position to help me."

"Help you? Why should—how could—"

"In finding the real murderer of Mr. Trevalyn and bringing him to justice."

She rose from her chair. It was a sign she considered the interview over.

"Madam, I beg you to listen. Mr. Pettit will corroborate what I say. This concerns you."

She seated herself again and he rapidly sketched his adventures of the night before up to the point of his snatching the chain from the escaping robber.

"Madam," he said, "all this is to lead up to a question. I must find out who that robber is." She looked at him as if she thought him crazy. "I beg to ask you, in the interests of justice, who the party could be who carried your portrait in his locket. There, madam."

She appeared not to understand him.

She took the locket and looked at it. First she merely glanced, then she stared, then riveted her eyes upon it and turned as pale as death. She uttered an exclamation of surprise, if not horror, and, looking up with an expression of terror in her face, said:

"Where did you get this?"

Steve repeated part of his story, and dwelt on the robbers' escape and explained how necessary it was to identify them in order to save his poor, innocent brother.

Miss Trevalyn's palpable amazement and horror constituted the greatest surprise Steve had yet got. He knew not what to make of it.

"I thought it right to come to you, madam," he said. "I have mentioned it to no one, but—"

"Then please don't mention it," she said, dropping her cold manner completely. "I would be obliged, sir, if the matter never passed your lips—if you'd even forget it." Her look was more pleading than her words. "Madam, I'll certainly obey you. I'll mention it to no one, but, of course, you'll tell me who the person—"

"No; it cannot aid you. I beg you—implore you—

never to mention the matter. Please leave the chain and locket with me. I'll recompense you for their value by—"

"No, madam. I want no recompense. They're not mine, anyhow." This was a direct shot, a strong hint that they were not her property, either. "I will breathe the matter to no one, but—"

"Oh, thank you. I am very glad you came to me."

Her manner was now so nice that he could not press his demand for the name of the locket owner. She called him "Mr. Ewart," and expressed a wish that his brother would be cleared.

Steve walked away from the house without either information or the locket, portrait and chain. Worse still, he was under a promise not to mention them. There was one good clew gone and a new mystery in its place.

Why had Miss Trevalyn looked so frightened? There was some excuse for her showing surprise. Why had she kept the locket and chain and begged Steve, on his honor, not to mention them? It certainly was most mysterious. Steve would have thought so if he could have seen Miss Trevalyn in her boudoir just after he left.

"Merciful heavens!" she exclaimed, as she closely examined the locket. She took out the portrait and looked at a little paper that had lain concealed beneath it. Immediately her beautiful face took on an expression of horror.

She threw up her arms, uttered a shriek and fell to the floor. Her maid came running in and found her in a dead faint. Her face was of the hue of death.

## CHAPTER XVI.

There are few places more lonely and awe-inspiring than the deep cut behind O'Hara's bush at the hour of ten o'clock at night. It takes a man of considerable nerve to go there then, yet Steve Ewart was going, and that on his bicycle, alone and unarmed, and without any surety that he would not meet with treachery.

He whirled round the corner of the bush, kept up a fast clip till he got near the top of the hill, and then dismounted and concealed his wheel where he could get it readily in case of emergency.

He started down the hill on foot.

His heart beat violently, and for very good reasons. Apart from the dangerous nature and evil reputation of the place, there was the fact that he himself had appointed the prospective meeting, and he had had no word whatever from the other party. If they had not arrived by the nine o'clock train—and he had failed to go to the station to see—it would be impossible for them to be here, and if they were here and waiting, he had no assurance they would not meet him in a warlike spirit. Nay, there were reasons for him to expect trouble, if not danger, from them.

He had got to the bottom, and was well into the narrow defile, when he came to an abrupt stop, startled by a peculiar sound.

"Basset," he called, in a low voice.

There was no reply. Everything was still.

This set his nerves tingling, for it was something differ-



ent from what he had expected. If the party he came to meet was there, why did they not speak?

"Basset," he called again.

All was silent for a few moments, and then there came again the sound that had brought him to a halt—a stealthy creeping noise, as of some one stealing toward him to take him unawares.

"Basset, be a man," he said, aloud. "I told you to meet me here to make a bargain."

With the late hour and the stillness of the wild, lonely place, his own voice seemed something dreadful. It reverberated in echoes down the defile, sending a chill throughout his frame, and making his heart beat inordinately.

"Treachery!" he muttered, as there suddenly came the sound of footsteps. He realized it was too late to retreat. The stealthy noise he had heard was a short distance ahead.

The footsteps were approaching him from behind. He placed his back against one of the walls of rock.

Some one ahead in the defile, some one behind; both coming toward him slowly and stealthily, as if their object was to seize hold of him.

He had appointed the deep cut as a meeting place purposely, knowing he could get Basset to meet him in no other spot in the neighborhood.

Was it Basset? If so, he had brought some one with him. But why did they not speak?

On they came. Steve moved softly forward along the wall, in order to keep about equi-distant from them. He had a stratagem in view.

At last they stopped. They had got close enough to hear each other's movements, and each thought the other was Steve. The latter was standing closely against a wall. The situation now suited him. He kept perfectly still.

The man on the left moved a pace or two and stopped to listen. The man on the right heard the noise, felt sure it was made by our hero, and suddenly broke into a run. He passed by Steve without seeing him, pounced on his companion farther down the defile, and a series of sounds arose that showed the two had grappled with each other in the darkness, and were struggling for supremacy.

So intent were they on their pastime that they did not hear Steve running on tiptoe back up the defile toward the foot of the hill. He had a pretty good idea what would have happened had he been caught. He heard Basset's voice saying:

"Take that for your confounded impertinence. Write me a defiant letter, will you? There! How do you like 'hat?'"

The answer Steve did not catch. He got out of the cut, and was turning to take a long and winding path up one of the banks, when he came face to face with a dark form that had just stepped forth from behind a little bush.

It was a woman who started on seeing Steve, and uttered a little cry.

Sounds of running could be heard down the ravine.

"Don't be afraid, madam," whispered Steve. "Come with me quickly. I want to speak with you on a matter of life-and-death importance." He offered her his arm in cavalier style.

To his surprise, she accepted it with a graceful bow,

and turned onto the path with him. It was too dark to see the expression of her face, but he felt her arm trembling. She was frightened over something.

"This way," she said, "we will go up onto the bank."

The path being narrow and steep, Steve presently took her hand, and, stepping ahead of her, assisted her to ascend.

The noise of running in the defile had ceased. He could no longer hear any sound on the part of the men.

"Softly," he whispered. "Who are they that came with you?"

She shivered, and merely answered:

"Wait."

Then she made a pretense of finding the hill impossible to climb, which showed she did not want to answer any personal questions.

Steve, who was impatient to help his brother's cause, gently caught hold of her arm and, using his strength, helped her over the steep part so that in a few moments they were at the top. She suffered herself to be led to the fence which inclosed O'Hara's bush, and seating herself on a big stone, said:

"We got your letter. You should not have been so threatening, or, at least, peremptory. You demanded that father should meet you here. It angered him."

"Father? Is Mr. Basset not your husband?"

"I am unmarried. He is my father. I begged him to let me accompany him to-night, for, knowing his violent temper, I was afraid something might happen when he met you. I wanted to speak to you, and I am glad I have that opportunity before you and he come together."

"Proceed, Miss Basset, I too have— Hark! They are looking for me. Speak quickly!"

"I beg you not to anger father further. He is incensed because you seem to think him guilty of the murder of Mr. Trevalyn, and—"

"Ah, you wrong me, madam. I know your father is innocent."

"What! Oh, I am so glad. I can now speak freely. It is your aim to have father and me appear at the trial?"

"Yes, as witnesses. That was my purpose in arranging this meeting. I am trying to save my poor brother."

"I am sorry for your brother, but listen: There are reasons why father and I cannot appear—dare not appear at the trial. In your letter you demanded it, and this meeting under threat of— Hark! I thought I heard a footstep—"

"No. Go on."

"It would do you no good, anyhow. Neither of us could tell anything to help your case. I know nothing."

"But your father can, no doubt. He was near the bank. He heard the shot; he saw certain flashing lights; he can explain the mystery about Patterson and certain talk I heard; he can tell what business he had with Mr. Trevalyn that caused Will to be sent to the station, and—"

"No, no, I beg you don't! You must not try to—"

"So you're here, are you? And you would defy me, would you?" growled a deep voice near them, and two dark forms appeared at the head of the path.

Steve gave a start, and with the lady rose to his feet. There was no chance of escape, as the men were upon him—Basset and he who was nicknamed Sassafras.



"Father, father, please—please leave Mr. Ewart alone. You mistake him. He is not trying to injure you."

The struggle ceased through the lady's pleading. Steve and the two men arose from the ground, where, after considerable wrestling, they had fallen and rolled over one another.

"Look here, Ewart," growled Basset. "You can thank my daughter for bein' left alive. I came here to-night to—"

"Father, Mr. Ewart has explained that——"

"Listen, Basset," interrupted Steve, "I overheard your talk while you had me cornered in O'Hara's bush. The murderer is somewhere in Clairville. I wrote you to meet me here because there are certain things you can explain that will help me. Tell me, why did Patterson——"

Basset's heavy hand came down on Steve's shoulder.

"Young man," he said, gruffly, "if you try to drag me into the courtroom, where I don't want to go, having good reasons for keeping out of it, you'll do it at your risk. My business is my own, and I don't want you prying into it."

"Then I give you notice, Mr. Basset, I'll try and have you served with a subpoena."

"You will, will you?"

"Father," cried the lady, rushing between them.

"That'll do, Lenore."

"Lenore!" exclaimed Steve. "Lenore Basset! L. B. Why, madam, it was you who dropped the purse."

"Get out of this," said Basset. "Come, I'll accompany you to the corner."

Stepping quickly over to the woman, whom Basset had gently pushed aside, Steve whispered:

"Madam, if you know, or should learn anything that will help me, even without your going into court, won't you be so good as——"

"Come on," said Basset, catching his arm and roughly pulling him away.

"I will, Mr. Ewart," the lady called after Steve.

The moon was rising, and the two stood talking for about five minutes, at the corner of the bush. Just as Steve was about to mount his wheel, his eye fell on a spot on the right leg of Basset's trousers, and rested there. There was no significance in what he saw, nor did he suppose he would ever recall it again, but his mind took it in just as anyone's mind will notice trifling details at certain times.

A long strip at the knee of Basset's trouser leg had been torn downward, and sewed up again in so clumsy a way that there were left traces of the large rent.

That was all. It was a small matter, but though Steve did not know it then, it made untrue the conclusion that kept running through his head:

"The night is lost. I have accomplished absolutely nothing."

Basset whispered a warning about summoning him as a witness, uttered a gruff "good-night" and set off at a run back toward the deep cut.

## CHAPTER XVII.

Next day the trial of Will Ewart began. It was held in the county town of Brampton. From the early hour of dawn till nearly nine o'clock crowds of farmers and

others might have been seen making their way in by the different roads, in order to be present and hear the remarkable case. Many came by train from considerable distances, and it was said there had never been such a heterogeneous mass of people assembled before in any part of the county.

It was expected that the occasion would be marked by an unusually brilliant display of forensic eloquence, and that on the part of one man alone—the crown prosecutor, who was no other than that eminent and remarkable man, Sir Andrew Farquhar, Canada's most renowned criminal lawyer and forensic orator—the terror of criminals, the dread and despairing of opposing counsel.

Pitted against this great man, with his prestige and talents, was Ned Tuckett. He alone was to defend the prisoner.

Perhaps that was what caused such great interest to be taken, the fact that a young and unknown lawyer—a mere boy in years, for Tuckett was only twenty-three—was to do battle with the great intellectual giant, Sir Andrew Farquhar, who had refused both a judgeship and a still higher title preferred by his sovereign.

People said it was a shame for the prisoner's young life to be left in the hands of a stripling like Tuckett. Why did his friends not engage some great firm of lawyers, men with reputations, who might hope to have some chance with Sir Andrew? The very idea! A human life at stake, and yet to pick out a poor little unknown village barrister and oppose him to the mighty Farquhar, who could browbeat or cajole witnesses at will, terrifying opposing counsel, fascinate juries, mesmerize judges, paralyze with fear the poor culprits and send audiences into tears! Did the prisoner's friends want him to hang? It looked like it.

So said the people. But Steve Ewart was stubborn. With unlimited money at his back, provided by his splendid friend, Trevalyn, Steve would have Ned Tuckett and no other. The coaxing of his friends could not move him; he would not even listen to the advice of Ned himself—to engage assistant counsel.

"Ned," he said, "I want you alone, because I have a degree of confidence in your ability that would astonish you. I want you to have the full glory and credit of winning this case and defeating the great Farquhar. God knows I love my brother Will as much as man can love another, but though people laugh and call me a fool, I place his life in your hands without fear. You'll save him, Ned. Your name will be ringing throughout the country in a week."

\* \* \* \* \*

At ten o'clock the courthouse was packed almost to suffocation. The judge was on the bench, the jury were in their places, the two lawyers who were to fight for such high stakes—Will Ewart's life—were below, facing both. Representatives of the press were there in plenty, as well as the government stenographers. Steve and Phil Trevalyn sat near Ned Tuckett, where they could post him occasionally. Indeed, Steve, though he was in the background, played a wonderful part throughout the trial. Some of the cleverest and most effective stratagems emanated extemporaneously from his quick brain.

The prisoner was brought in and placed in the dock by two armed constables, who remained beside him to guard



against escape. Immediately all eyes were turned on him. He was pale, hollow-eyed and haggard. When he saw his brother Steve below him he involuntarily reached out his hands and barely suppressed a wild cry. Poor fellow! Worn out by sleepless nights of worry, he now shrank before the dread ordeal. In a piteous way he looked round, expecting to see his mother. Steve signaled to him that he had prevailed on her to stay at home.

We may pass over the preliminaries, which were gone through in a formal manner. The indictment was read and the prisoner pleaded "not guilty."

Then the business of taking the depositions of the witnesses for the prosecution began, and with it the great fight for the preservation of poor Will's life and liberty. At the opening of the trial the bench allowed all the witnesses to remain in the courtroom and hear one another's evidence.

Before going further it is necessary to point out a great and serious difficulty under which the defense labored. It had cost Steve and Tuckett many an hour of worry. It was this:

How was the prosecution going to prove that Will had been in the back room of the bank alone with Mr. Trevalyn that night at all? The defense had it only from Will's own lips. The crown couldn't put Will in the box. How, then, was it going to show up all of Will's doing from eight to nine o'clock that night, as Farquhar in his opening address had promised to do? Where had the crown got its information? What witness was it relying on?

Their ignorance of the crown's tactics, how it was going to fight the battle, what chief witness it was depending upon, and what was the strength of its secret information, frightened Tuckett and Steve.

There was also another cause of anxiety for Steve and Tuckett—the government detective, Johnson. What was going to be his line of policy? What secret information had he gathered for the crown since he came to the village? Had his researches been favorable to the prisoner or not? In short, would he swear hard against Will?

As yet neither Tuckett nor Steve, nor even Phil Trevalyn, had seen this man Johnson, the great crown detective. They had been unable to catch sight of him since he arrived in Clairville. Mr. Johnson had contrived to keep wholly in the dark.

Lo! before the trial had got well started the time came for their curiosity to be satisfied. The crown began its battle by bringing to the stand the doctor, the undertaker and another unimportant witness. Their evidence was the same as at the inquest.

When the turn of the next witness came, Steve heard the words:

"Call Detective Johnson."

A strapping big man walked up from the back of the courtroom and coolly entered the box.

The moment Steve heard his voice he gave a start. He looked at him, heard him speak again, and then whispered his discovery to Phil and Tuckett.

There was no mistaking that deep, sonorous voice, whose first notes seemed to startle all in the room. Only one man could have such a voice. Steve would have known it among a million, and now he knew the owner.

It was Bennett, or Strong Voice!

He and Johnson, the detective, were one and the same man!

## CHAPTER XVIII.

In a flash the truth came to Steve. Johnson had known Basset and Sassafras a long time, and had often associated with him for short periods as a pal, they not guessing he was a detective. When he came to work on this case and found them in Clairville, he resorted to his old game, perhaps because he suspected them of the murder. It accounted for his comings and goings and mysterious absences, which he no doubt explained to them in some plausible manner.

In the witness box now he simply answered three questions of Farquhar's, to prove that Mr. Trevalyn was deliberately murdered by a pistol shot fired within the walls of the back office, and then he was retired. This was all required of him at present. He was to be called again. It was plain he was loaded with information dangerous to the prisoner.

Mr. Pettit was called and partly examined. He was questioned as to the finding of the body. He, too, was to be called again.

The prosecution had now shown that Mr. Trevalyn had been murdered in the manner set forth in the indictment. The next step was to show that the prisoner had done the deed. Immediately a hush fell on the courtroom. A new interest could be seen in the people's faces.

The real fight was about to begin.

Poor Will trembled in the dock and looked appealingly to Steve. Steve looked at Tuckett and saw him surprisingly cool, yet an anxious look was in his face as he sat leaning forward, waiting to see what the crown's first step would be.

Ah, and what was the crown's first step going to be? What witness were they going to call, to connect Will with Mr. Trevalyn? It could not be Longstaff. He was to be made dangerous in another way.

It was an anxious moment for the defense—a moment of waiting to see the enemy reveal his strength.

"Call Patterson," said Farquhar, and the crier repeated the name.

"Heavens! Patterson!" muttered Steve. "What can this mean?" Tuckett showed genuine fear.

Patterson advanced to the witness box with every outward sign of being nervous and ill at ease. He was sworn.

He told, succinctly, how, on the night of the murder, Mr. Pettit, the prisoner and himself were working at the books in the front room of the bank; how Mr. Pettit left, and shortly after he—the witness—left, the time being about twenty minutes past eight.

"Where was the prisoner then?" asked counsel for the prosecution, Farquhar.

"I left him alone in the bank at the books—that is, in the front room," replied Patterson.

Now came a disconcerting surprise for the defense.

"Did you see the prisoner again that night, witness?" asked Sir Andrew.

"Yes, three times," answered Patterson.

"Heavens!" ejaculated Steve, almost aloud.

"State when and where," said the great crown attorney, laconically.

"Well," said Patterson, his nervousness having disappeared, "I passed the bank a little later and looked in to



see if Manager Pettit had returned. He had said he might return before or about nine."

"What was your reason for seeing if Mr. Pettit was there?"

"Well, if I had seen him there I would have gone in and returned to my work for a while. I had had no permission to leave."

"Just so. Describe what you saw and state just when you first looked in."

Poor Will turned pale in the box. Steve and Trevalyn exchanged glances of fear. Tuckett's face wore an anxious look.

Here was the witness the prosecution had been depending on to connect Will with Mr. Trevalyn. It came like a thunderbolt without warning.

"After leaving the bank I went for a short spin on my wheel," said Patterson. "Returning, I led my wheel onto the sidewalk, looked in at one of the bank windows and saw Mr. Trevalyn there talking with the prisoner. That was shortly after half-past eight. I watched and saw Mr. Trevalyn go into the back room, leaving the door slightly open."

"Where was the prisoner then?"

"At his desk, alone. I saw him pick up and examine the big pistol that is kept in the bank. He laid it down again behind the ledger."

At this point Will gave a quick start and turned deathly pale. He looked up, and seeing all the people excited and whispering together, he dropped his eyes and sat like a statue, praying in his heart for deliverance. He remembered having casually picked up the big pistol from where it usually lay on the teller's desk and looked at it carelessly, after which he went on with his work of adding columns of figures.

The pistol was now produced in court. Patterson at once identified it, and swore it had been loaded when he left the bank. It had since been discharged—the first time in two years.

This was a thundershock for the defense.

The prosecution was going to prove that Will used the bank pistol.

Who had discharged it?

Why had it been discharged?

Steve trembled. Here is where the vaguely expected villainy came in. Some one had prepared the pistol, with this purpose in view, since the night of the tragedy. Who?

"Proceed," said Farquhar, when the usher had quieted the murmurs of the audience.

"I put away my bicycle," continued Patterson, "and quickly changed my dress in my room at the Royal Arms. I hurried off to go to Fulljames' rooms, as we were going to a ball together. I had to pass the bank. Wondering if Mr. Pettit had yet got back, I stopped and looked in, first at the window near the teller's cage, then at the front door, which was a few inches open. I saw by the clock that it was a quarter to nine. As I put my head in at the door I heard Mr. Trevalyn's voice in the back office calling Will Ewart. I saw the prisoner rise from his desk and enter the back office, and I saw the door close after him and heard the lock click. I then hurried up to Fulljames' rooms."

"That's twice—go on," said Farquhar.

"I found Cressy waiting for Fulljames, who was not

yet ready. I asked the latter to hurry up with his dressing, and meanwhile I would slip down to the Royal Arms for my cigarette case, which I had forgotten. Fulljames entered his bedroom to dress. I started down the stairs, but had to go very slowly, as the lights were not lighted in the second floor hall. I stumbled and hurt my leg badly on the outside stairway, and I stood some little time on the stairs, brushing the dust off my clothes. All at once I heard a loud pistol shot."

"Yes, yes; proceed," said Sir Andrew, apparently anxious to hurry him on.

Steve saw the weak point and nudged Tuckett. He looked at Longstaff and saw the latter for the first time show a sign of uneasiness.

"I paused for a moment listening," continued Patterson, "and then ran to the corner at Main Street. I saw some one just going in at the door of the office. I came to a stop, and the next instant saw some one, farther up the street, rush out of the bank door, almost stumble in front of the archway and then come bounding headlong toward me. Thinking it was Will Ewart, and not wishing him to see me, I turned quickly and flew back to the stairway. As I turned into the hall at the top I heard some one beneath me, but did not stop to look. I groped my way slowly up to Fulljames' sitting room, and had just got there when he emerged from his bedroom fully dressed."

"You thought that the person you saw running out of the bank and down the street toward you was the prisoner, Ewart?" asked Farquhar, quietly.

"Yes," answered Patterson. "That was my impression, having seen him in the bank a few minutes previously. I did not then know a murder had been committed."

"That'll do. You may retire."

Patterson left the box without being cross-examined by Tuckett. It seemed as if the latter had been staggered too much to question him. People shook their heads.

Mr. Pettit was recalled. He corroborated the first part of Patterson's evidence, and testified as to the discovery of the murder and the facts that the door of the inner room was found locked and the key of it found in Mr. Trevalyn's pocket.

"How many keys of the door were there?" asked Farquhar.

"Two only," replied Mr. Pettit. "Mine and Mr. Trevalyn's."

"Were you always careful about never letting your key out of your possession even for a moment?"

Steve saw the drift, and almost started from his chair in fright when he recalled how he himself had lately had the key lent him by the manager. He pictured the sensation in court if Farquhar's questions should not draw that fact out of Mr. Pettit. Why, it would lead to the enforced confession that he himself had passed part of a night in the bank, and that might serve to hang his brother Will. Poor Steve! The sweat of horror and suspense rolled down his face. While his heart beat inordinately, his mind was torn with agony.

Tuckett noticed him. "Hush! I'll save him yet, Steve," he whispered, though his face did not show even a ray of hope.

"God bless you, Ned, old chap," murmured Steve. After a lengthy pause Mr. Pettit said:



"I must confess I was not very particular, as I fully trusted my clerks. I often hung the key on a nail where they could get it, so that they could get into the back room and put the books away in the vault. There is a spring lock to the door, and the key opens it and the ordinary lock together."

"Answer this, witness," said Farquhar. "Could the prisoner at any time have secured possession of your key long enough to take an impression of it or get one made like it?"

"Yes; the key has been out of my possession a whole day at a time."

"Tell me also: Could the murderer, while in the room, have taken the key from the door, or from wherever it lay, put it in the pocket of the deceased and then come out, and without any other key, have left the door as you found it?"

"No, on account of the ordinary lock. It required the insertion and turning of a key, either from the inside or the outside, to leave the door as we found it—that is to say, locked with both locks."

"I see. Then, as Mr. Trevalyn's key was found in his pocket, the murderer must either have not come out through the door at all, or else he had another key?"

"That's it, exactly, and I am certain he never went out by either of the windows."

"That'll do. You may retire. I will call George Walter Fulljames."

This was unexpected by the defense, but they soon saw that the prosecution wanted very little from this man, though that little was highly important.

On being sworn, Fulljames testified that Will Ewart had once shown him the bank pistol in his room—a fact—and he also swore that Patterson had told him he had lately found in the drawer of Will's desk in the bank a piece of blotting paper on which was drawn the impression or picture of a key of about that size—a fact, but it was not Will who had drawn the picture.

Patterson was recalled. He admitted having told Fulljames this, and of having found the blotting paper in the drawer, but he would not swear to a belief that the prisoner drew it. He was the most nervous man in the room as he left the box, yet the jury seemed to notice this less than the damaging nature of his testimony, and the fact that Tuckett made no attempt to refute or even shake it.

"Call Arthur Longstaff!"

There was a sensation in court as Longstaff rose from his seat and walked calmly to the box.

The prisoner's face had become the color of ashes, and the twitching of his hands and his helpless, appealing looks toward his brother were telling strongly on the jury.

Ned Tuckett had not yet examined a single witness. One by one they were stepping out of the box—escaping from him—and he was not making an effort to shake their testimony. They were all crown witnesses, and as such, having once escaped from the box, they could not be recalled by the defense. The jury seemed astonished that Tuckett did not even make a show of embarrassing some of them by questions before they took their seats.

Indeed, poor Tuckett looked as if he had been thoroughly overawed and frightened by the superiority of that towering intellectual giant. Sir Andrew Farquhar,

the prosecuting attorney, who, with unerring cleverness, was slowly and relentlessly weaving a net of incriminating testimony about Will Ewart.

At the back of the hall and outside the building the sports were betting three to one against the prisoner's acquittal. Government Detective Johnson was to give evidence yet, and it was whispered he had made certain discoveries that simply meant the weaving of a rope to hang Will Ewart.

There was one man in court worth watching—Steve Ewart.

He sat rigid and erect, with grave, set face, his teeth and fists almost clinched, his eyes fairly blazing as they rested on the man in the box.

With him the great moment had come. Would Arthur Longstaff dare to repeat his lies against Will?

Longstaff started and coolly repeated the evidence he had given at the inquest. At eight minutes to nine, or thereabouts, he had walked from his front office into his back office, closing the door, as was his wont; and from there, after a delay of about five minutes, during which he had sat still glancing over a newspaper, he stepped out onto South Street by his side door. While standing in front of the door, looking up at the sky, he heard a pistol shot. A few moments later he saw Will Ewart dash round the corner of the office and flee past him toward the station. The prisoner twice looked back to see if he were being pursued. He carried a small package in his hand.

A sensation in court.

Farquhar announced that he had no questions to ask.

The audience leaned forward expecting Tuckett to cross-examine witness. They could not believe their eyes when they saw Longstaff walk out of the witness box without Ned Tuckett's asking a single question. A pretty lawyer foorsooth! A nice man to save an accused person from the scaffold! A fine power to set up against Sir Andrew Farquhar! "He ought to be knighted as well as Sir Andrew," said one wag of a fellow in the center of the hall, whereat those within the radius of hearing laughed.

It was the general opinion that poor young Will Ewart was gone. As things were shaping themselves, he had not the ghost of a chance.

This opinion was strengthened the next moment when three things, staggering to the defense, happened almost simultaneously:

First, Mr. Johnson, alias Bennett, the government detective, was asked not to leave the room, as he would be called presently. Next, Mr. Edward Poynter received a subpoena from the prosecution then and there, in consequence, it was supposed, of some very recent discovery.

And last, but not least, Edward Tuckett took sick—the people said from fright—and asked the judge for a short recess.

Amid a terrible sensation the court was adjourned till one o'clock.

The betting of the sports was now ten to one against the prisoner, Will Ewart, would hang.



## CHAPTER XIX.

"Well, I suppose you think I'm making a mess of it, Steve," said Tuckett, gloomily, though he smiled. "Eh, Trevalyn?"

The three were in an anteroom, awaiting the reopening of the court. Tuckett had really been taken sick, but he got over the attack in a few minutes. He had overworked himself on the case lately.

Trevalyn made no reply. He was completely hopeless. Steve's answer was a surprise to his listeners.

"Ned, old chap," he said, taking his hand, "if the whole world upbraids you, I'll stick to you. I don't regret my choice. You'll surprise some of them yet."

Tuckett's eyes sparkled and then grew dim with tears. His teeth were set together as he turned away.

"I've got a surprise for you both," said Trevalyn. "My brother Hal has discovered the diamond is bogus. It is not the original."

Steve leaped to his feet.

"Trevalyn," he cried, "you've just supplied me with what I wanted—the motive for the mysterious visits to the bank. Now I've got it. The party that stole the real diamond put this in its place. For what? To delay the discovery of the robbery, and—ho! ho! Listen," and he explained a new theory connected with the men of the bush.

Presently the three resumed the study of the kodak plate, at which they had already spent hours. It showed the outlines of two men standing side by side, but except at the bottom of the picture was very indistinct. Their faces could not be seen at all.

"It's a failure," said Steve at last. "The time's up."

"I give it up," put in Tuckett. "What do you say, Trevalyn?"

"Well, beyond this I can't see anything," replied Phil, "namely, that one of them has a strip of his trousers torn at the knee. See, it is——"

"What!" cried Steve. He snatched the picture and ran to the window, having immediately recalled the scene at the corner of O'Hara's bush the night before. "Ha! It's Basset!" he added. "I'm certain. That shows it was he who was in the bank. It was from Basset I snatched the locket and chain with Miss Trevalyn's portrait, and——"

It had come out before he could check himself, his excitement being great.

"My sister!" exclaimed Trevalyn, turning pale. "I understand all," he added. "I discovered her with the locket this morning, and from her mutterings and your words I—Steve, I'm in duty bound to tell you what I've discovered to be a fact."

"What do you mean?"

"That man Basset is my mother's brother. The family cast him off years ago on account of his wildness, and it is said he has since developed into a burglar. I suspect he approached father for money, threatening to expose his connection with the family. The locket and chain he once stole from Hal. My sister must have been shocked, Steve. By the way, Basset has a daughter—my cousin, Lenore."

"I talked with her at the Bush," said Steve. "But——"

"What?"

"Don't fret so. Basset didn't murder your father, even though he did visit the bank. I know he's innocent."

"Thank God. Gwendolin will be glad to know that. I felt in duty bound to tell you what I did."

"Whew!" said Steve, suddenly. "I'm thinking—the bogus diamond carefully laid on the floor of the bank—Basset—the anxiety of the men of the bush—Patterson—no, I can't quite see it, but——"

A telegram was brought in for Phil Trevalyn. It was from his brother Hal, in Clairville, and read as follows:

"Tell your friend, Ewart, that man named Basset and a companion were secretly arrested last night by some one who wished to prevent their escape, lest they should be wanted before the trial is over. Who or why, I can't learn."

"HAL."

"Ho! ho!" said Steve. "More light. I begin to see. This thing would solve itself soon."

Tuckett and Trevalyn confessed they couldn't see.

"You can't?" exclaimed Steve. "Well, look here. The author of that arrest is doing it for the same object that he had in view when he 'salted' the bogus diamond. I'm convinced now of Basset's innocence. 'Secretly arrested,' you notice. Party who gave orders for arrest anonymous. Surely you can see. They didn't want Basset at the trial, but they want him 'secretly' held on tap in case——"

"In case of what?" asked the other two, staring in amazement.

"Why, in case the trial should take an unforeseen twist and go wrong after all. In short, in case my brother is declared 'not guilty.'"

"Whew!"

"Give me a paper, quick. We must get a telegram to Clairville as fast as it can be flashed," and sitting down, Steve started to write, when he suddenly stopped and said:

"Whom can we get in Clairville to do a job?"

"Brother Hal," cried Trevalyn. "He's expecting just such a thing. He wanted to come to the trial with me, but I said: Hal, I must go, but you stay. Ewart may need a friend here to wire some commission to, or message, and you don't know what service you can do him! I know that Hal will only be——"

"Trevalyn, you're a brick," cried Steve, jumping up and seizing his hands. "And so is your brother. I'll do it," and down he sat and wrote the following telegram:

"HAROLD TREVALYN: Quietly secure quick release of Basset, and have him brought here immediately. Assure him no danger. Hurry. STEPHEN EWART."

A messenger was sent running to the telegraph office with it.

"There, we've stolen some one's thunder," remarked Steve. "Now, Ned, I want to talk to you."

Phil Trevalyn slipped out and quietly dispatched a second message.

"HAL: Don't let word of it reach here nor let surprise delay you. Offer Uncle Basset plenty money. Gallop. "PHIL."

The trial reopened at one o'clock. Hay and Dent were put on the stand in turn and described the arrest, the



prisoner's flight and nervousness, and the finding of the money and the burglar's tool on his person. They were allowed to go without cross-examination, to the disgust of the prisoner's sympathizers—and those were nearly all in court.

Soon all the evidence of the prosecution was in.

The crown rested its case.

Not one of their witnesses had been asked a question by the defense. People stared in wonder.

That Will Ewart was lost was the consensus of opinion. With such a strong case made out, practically no defense, and Farquhar's terrible address to the jury still to come, nothing could save the prisoner. The jury plainly had their minds made up.

The defense began.

The court got a surprise. Ned Tuckett had awakened from sleep.

He first gave the judge a list of the witnesses he intended to call, and asked his honor to have them all, except two, sent out of the room, so that they could not hear one another testify. One exception was a lady.

Farquhar objected to this. The list were mostly crown witnesses, he said, and could not be recalled.

"They were all subpoenaed for the defense," replied Tuckett, and Sir Andrew sat down, smiling kindly.

The judge granted Tuckett's demand. A number of witnesses left the room. The only man allowed to remain was Arthur Longstaff. He was as much surprised as the people behind him. He was called to the stand.

"Describe exactly where you stood when you heard the shot," said Tuckett.

"On South Street, just outside the side door of my office, and within six feet of the stairway," replied Longstaff.

"Did you see anyone pass besides Will Ewart, or was there anyone near you while you stood there?"

Longstaff's former testimony obliged him to say: "No one but Ewart."

"Did you go out of the back door of your office at all—that is, into the back yard?"

After a slight start witness said: "No; I have not opened that door for months."

"That'll do. Robert Barton."

Bob Barton trembled worse than the prisoner, his ignorant mind imagining that, somehow, it was as a culprit he was there. He was not allowed to tell his whole story just yet. Tuckett had certain questions to ask.

"Did you hear the shot, and if so, where were you at the time?"

"I heard the shot. I was hiding under the stairway outside."

"Did you see Patterson or Longstaff?"

"Longstaff lies. He wasn't on the street. He was in the back yard at the time. Patterson lies, too. He was at the foot of the stairs, not on top. Will Ewart didn't run by after the shot at all. It was a man, and——"

"That'll do for the present. Call Miss Basset."

Longstaff looked decidedly uncomfortable. There was a new air of interest in court. Ned Tuckett no longer had contemptuous looks leveled at him.

There was considerable surprise shown when "the lady of the case" came forward. Steve had that morning got a kind note from her saying she was coming to court to testify, and would try to save his brother.

"Proceed," said Tuckett.

"Father and I," continued Miss Basset, "had an appointment with Mr. Trevalyn in his bank that night at nine o'clock. It was made by a note sent to me, signed M. T., and addressed L. B. I followed father from Toronto, and even around the village, because I feared he and Mr. Trevalyn would quarrel. We overtook the latter at the bank door about five minutes after half-past eight. He stepped into the bank. Father called him out and asked him for money. Uncle Trevalyn told father to go to the station and wait there, and at nine o'clock he would send a package containing one thousand dollars by his young clerk, who was inside working at the books, and whom we saw through the window. I identify the prisoner as said clerk. Father went off to the station. I remained outside the bank walking up and down, yet avoiding notice, because I wanted to see Uncle Trevalyn after the clerk had gone. At ten minutes to nine the clerk came out. I was just passing. Not wishing him to see me, I hurried past, saying 'Good-night!' In my excitement I dropped my purse. The clerk hastened away to the station with the package in his hand."

"Proceed, please."

"Anxious as I was to see uncle and ask him to give father steady employment, I was afraid to go into the bank—there was an office full of men near—so I waited, hoping he would come out. I had already seen a former witness—Patterson—pass and look into the bank, but he could not see me, as I slipped into the dark archway. At five minutes to nine father returned from the station by another route. He was angry, having missed the young clerk. He would not listen to me, but wanted to go into the bank and talk with Uncle Trevalyn. Seeing a gentleman coming down the street, we both slipped into the dark archway, and from there we saw lights flashing on the pump factory. Some man also passed the rear end of the archway to the left very hurriedly. Father was much nearer to him than I, and says he'd almost know him again."

"Was he large?"

"Very. Well, father rushed out onto the sidewalk, with me after him. There was no one in sight. Father ran into the bank, while I paused at the door, surprised. There was a man in the bank—the gentleman we had seen coming down the street. He was knocking on the door of uncle's inner room. He turned and looked at father, and then stooped, as if to pick something up. I stepped inside the front door. 'Father,' I began. That moment there was a startling loud pistol shot in the inner room, a low cry and the sounds of a scuffle or staggering." Miss Basset paused.

"Good heavens," thought Steve. "These three people were in the bank when Murphy and I were at the archway. They must have run away just as we entered the office."

"The three of us were thunderstruck," continued the lady. "The gentleman said to father: 'Quick! Take the lady away. There's danger here.' The three of us hurried out, father pushing by the stranger, reaching the sidewalk first and rushing off alone. The gentleman courteously took my arm, for I was weak, and the two of us fled round the corner onto South Street, passing the office, in which there was a crowd of men. A little later we separated. I ran to the railway station, and the first



one I saw there was the young clerk—the prisoner—who had been quietly waiting for father for nearly ten minutes.

There was the greatest excitement in court as she concluded her testimony. For some minutes the dropping of a pin might have been heard.

"Did you see that man—Longstaff—on South Street, near the corner, as you passed?" asked Tuckett.

"I am positive there was no one on the sidewalk on either street. Moreover, I recall that the gentleman said: 'Madam, fortunately there is no one about. You're safe.' He was a most chivalrous and refined gentleman."

Great sensation in court. Every eye was turned on Longstaff, who was thus given the lie direct. His face had assumed a ghastly pallor.

Steve's heart bounded with joy, and so did the prisoner's. Hope sprang up anew. The people, now wholly with the prisoner, were fast gaining respect for Tuckett.

"One more question, madam," said that gentleman. "Could you identify the strange, chivalrous gentleman that was in the bank with you and your father, and that so kindly helped you?"

"Yes," said Miss Basset, and she looked slowly around. "Ah, I see him in court," she cried. "There he is!" and she pointed to a man sitting well in front.

Tremendous sensation.

The man smiled and bowed.

It was Mr. Poynter!

## CHAPTER XX.

Mr. Poynter, smiling, talked in whispers with a fine-looking, dignified, white-haired, but extremely youthful-looking old gentleman, who sat beside him. He had already sent word to Tuckett that he wished to testify.

He was called to the box. He corroborated the part of Miss Basset's evidence in which he was concerned, and said:

"While knocking at the door I dropped a flat cuff button, which got caught underneath the door. Just as the lady entered I stooped to pick it up, but my fingers closing on it, pushed the button still further under and into the other room."

"Whew!" muttered Steve. "I remember now where I first saw that button—at the Union Station, Toronto, when mother and I—I must ask this Poynter some time."

"While stooping," continued Poynter, "I heard a noise within the room as of some one leaping out of a chair and upsetting it, and a voice cried out: 'What! You signor? And you'd shoot me?'"

"I thought immediately of '*Et tu, Brute*,' and looked at Basset beside me, and that moment the shot came."

Among a few people there was a great sensation. Trevalyn whispered excitedly to Steve, and the latter nudged and spoke to him. Longstaff grew paler. The late Mr. Trevalyn was wont to address any man he knew well as signor.

Whispers of "the man at the window—he who passed the archway to the left," could be heard throughout the room.

Farquhar arose to cross-examine Poynter.

"Why did you enter the bank?" he asked. "What was your business with deceased?"

Question objected to by Tuckett. The bench was about to decide, when Poynter smilingly said:

"I'll gladly tell you. I went in to see Mr. Trevalyn about this same young man, the prisoner. I am the bosom friend and acting agent of a very wealthy gentleman deeply interested, through purely sentimental motives, in the welfare of the Ewart family. In fact, I was sent to the village to study the Ewart boys, become their friend, help them in their careers, find out if they had the ambition to take a course at Toronto University, and, in short, to prepare them, in due time, for the benevolent intention of the gentleman I represent, who is a millionaire without heirs of his own, and desires to bequeath his property to the Ewart boys, for private reasons of his own. My intention in knocking at the door was to have an interview on the subject with poor Mr. Trevalyn."

To say this created a stir in court would be putting it mildly. It added a romantic interest to the case that fascinated everybody. All guessed that the white-haired gentleman seen with Poynter was the person in question.

Sir Andrew Farquhar here arose.

"Your lordship," he said, smiling kindly, "as counsel for the crown, I deem it my pleasant duty, in view of the sudden turn this remarkable case has taken, to ask your lordship to let it drop right here and acquit the prisoner, whom my reason tells me to be innocent. Nay, my conscience prompts me, as the crown's representative, to ask you to take such steps at this crisis as will enable the court, not only to acknowledge his innocence, but even to do it in such an emphatic manner as will serve as some kind of partial atonement and compensation for the wrong done him. With my brother counsel—this brilliant young man, who has so ably conducted the defense, who has astonished us by his adroit tactics, who has this day proved himself to be an honor and credit to the Canadian bar, who, if my instinct serves me, will some day, not far distant, be acknowledged one of the brightest shining legal lights of the country—in conjunction, I say, with this young forensic gladiator, whom I am proud to have done legal battle with—ay! though I have been, for the first time in my life, vanquished—I ask your lordship to end the case here, and have the prisoner honorably discharged."

The presence of judge and jury and the calls of the usher could not restrain the roar of applause bursting from a thousand throats that greeted this magnificent tribute to, and eulogy of, the splendid talents of the bashful, blushing, unassuming and boyish Ned Tuckett. It was deafening. It had a joyful ring.

What they had just listened to—and it would soon be flashing over the wires to all parts—meant life and liberty, for Will Ewart, relief and joy for his friends, widespread fame for Tuckett.

The judge was about to grant Farquhar's request, the applause having subsided, when Tuckett rose quickly to his feet.

"Your lordship," he said, "I sincerely thank counsel for the crown for his kind words, of which I am unworthy. I join him in asking that the prisoner may be at once creditably discharged, but I cannot join in the request that the case may here end. As prisoner's counsel, I must seize the chance, while it lasts, to further vindicate his good name by availing myself of my present right to put



witnesses in the box. I therefore beg your lordship that the case may go on."

The people were fairly staggered. Judge, jury and counsel for the crown were struck speechless. What did it mean? What was Tuckett driving at?

There came a silence so deep that the dropping of a pin could have been heard. Then the judge yielded his permission, and all eyes turned on Tuckett.

"Your lordship," said he, "I desire to put Stephen Ewart in the box."

A second hush fell on the room.

The people held their breath.

## CHAPTER XXI.

Steve took the stand, and with admirable coolness gave a graphic account of his whole work on the case, telling everything the reader is acquainted with, except a few circumstances and trifling events that might be hurtful to Bassett.

Bob Barton was called. He testified that, on leaving the front office shortly before nine, he went round on South Street and looked into the back office through the window. Presently Longstaff entered. He raised the window curtain slightly, looked into the back yard, and then, dropping the curtain, leaped over to the table and snatched up his lamp. He lowered the curtain of Bob's window as a precaution, but Bob averred he was still able to see through the crack. He saw Longstaff waving the lamp back and forward in front of the back window, while with one hand he held a corner of the curtain up.

Further examined by Tuckett, Bob swore that Longstaff suddenly set down his lamp, opened the back door and stepped out into the yard. Presently there was a pistol report. Bob, hearing Patterson on the steps, took refuge under the dark stairway. He saw Patterson run to the corner, stop, turn back and remount the stairway. He heard him in the hall above. Now he saw a man turning the corner of the office and rushing past him. He had since seen this man—Basset—near O'Hara's bush. Scarcely had the runner got by, when a man and a woman came round the office corner together. They, too, were running hard. They fled down South Street, toward the railway station.

"I was just a-goin' to come forth from my hidin' place," said Bob, "when Longstaff stepped out of his side door. I had heard his back door closing just before the second runner appeared. As his foot touched the sidewalk I heard him kind o' shiver—he was so close I could 'a touched him—and as he looked up and down, say: 'Well, the Ruby-corn is crost.' He hurried round the corner on to Main Street. That's all, from yours truly, Bob Barton."

In spite of the tragic surprise, every man in the room, but one, laughed at Bob's humorous sally. That one was Longstaff, now the color of a corpse.

"Your lordship, I demand the immediate arrest of Arthur Longstaff," said Tuckett.

Great excitement. A great stroke! Tuckett here performed a masterpiece of strategy. The crowd did not understand the motive at first, but as soon as Longstaff was arrested they did. Tuckett asked that his other witnesses be now brought in.

In they came, Cressy, Fulljames, Patterson and others. When Fulljames and Patterson saw Longstaff standing near the dock, handcuffed and in custody, and when they grasped the fact that Will Ewart had long ago been acquitted and the trial was still going on, they were almost paralyzed by astonishment and fear.

Patterson was called to the stand.

"Where did you go on your wheel the night of the murder?" asked Tuckett.

"Oh, just down the road for a little spin," was the nervously uttered reply.

"Do you know one Daniel Basset?"

"Patterson grew paler, and stammered forth: "Yes."

"Do you smoke 'Robinson's Twist?'"

"Y-yes."

"Come," said Tuckett, with an assumption of anger and impatience, "tell the court this whole business with Basset. You know him well enough to lend him tobacco. We want your version of it."

The audience was as surprised as poor Patterson, who imagined his whole secret was known. He had really given Basset tobacco—the famous 'Twist'—but he could not suppose that Tuckett and Steve had merely guessed that, or, at all events, arrived at it by "putting two and two together."

"It wasn't my fault," stammered the cowardly Patterson. "It was Fulljames put me up to it."

"You lie!" cried the accused individual. There was another tremendous sensation. Steve whispered to Tuckett. The latter immediately had Longstaff turned round, so that his back would be toward Fulljames. He had tried to signal to the latter.

"Go on. Tell your share in it," said Tuckett, with a look as if he knew all about it and was not fishing to get the truth.

"Well, when I arranged with the men of the bush to help them rob the bank, Fulljames urged me on, and——"

Patterson was now making a confession. He had broken down before Tuckett's clever ruse of arresting Longstaff. "Yes," he continued, in a wailing voice, "I promised to help the men, but they didn't do it, mind you, nor me, either. I gave the combination to Fulljames, as well as to them, ay! and it was Fulljames that got me to have the key made and he himself shot off the pistol when I stole it out of——"

Patterson fainted, and was carried out of the box. Fulljames sat on a bench, and placing his elbows on his knees, buried his head in his hands.

Longstaff shouted out, in thunder tones:

"Don't weaken, Fulljames. Don't tell a thing. They're bluffing. They——"

He was hurried out of the room by the constables, amid a scene of excitement that has rarely, if ever, been equaled in a court of law, just as Hal Trevalyn arrived with Basset, and walked into the court.

Fulljames did weaken, though, and even made a con-



fession; ay! he broke down, in spite of his iron nerve, as Patterson had.

He told how Patterson had confided to him, one day, that he had been secretly approached by two strangers on the subject of robbing the Trevalyn bank. He was to get a share of the spoils in return for giving them information, the combination of the vault, etc., and such help, devoid of personal risk, as he could. Fulljames confided the story to Longstaff—his bosom friend, though the townspeople did not know it—and, after a talk, the two decided to take advantage of the way things stood to get the spoils for themselves.

Fulljames kept advising Patterson what to do, and in this way got from him not only the combination of the outer door of the vault, but also the knowledge of the various amounts of money in it from time to time. He urged Patterson to advise Basset to appoint pay night for the men—June 21st—as the best time to commit the robbery; then he and Longstaff planned to forestall them in the robbery and have them caught in the act, when they came, as further security for themselves. When he thought the time was appointed beyond recall, he said to Patterson: "Surely, you're not serious in this thing. Why, I've been simply joking all along." That was about six o'clock of the evening of the crime. Patterson took alarm, and, at the first chance, hurried to the bush to call the engagement off. This was the trip he made on his bicycle, after leaving Will.

Fulljames and Longstaff arranged a code of signals to appear on the pump-factory door, where they could not be seen, except from the two points where they were made—namely, the bedroom of the one and the inner or private office of the other. Fulljames had a long rope ladder, which he could let down from his bedroom window, on the third floor, till an end touched the ground.

It was not intended to murder Mr. Trevalyn. That was the result of circumstances, and of their attempt being precipitated by these circumstances.

Each had arranged well for an alibi. Longstaff, we know, was in his office. Fifty men would have sworn that. Fulljames was in his sitting room, with Cressy, when, about twenty minutes from nine, he got word from Longstaff that Mr. Trevalyn was in his office. "Get ready." At five minutes to nine, or shortly before it, Fulljames went into his bedroom to dress. He already had his dress suit concealed beneath his long dressing gown. Signals passed between the two conspirators, Fulljames, meanwhile, humming a tune and occasionally talking out to Cressy.

The rope ladder was lowered. Longstaff crossed the yard, ascended to the top of the open window, and saw the diamond in Mr. Trevalyn's hand. He tried to signal up to Fulljames, when Mr. Trevalyn turned and sprang

off his chair, uttering the words Poynter had heard. Longstaff put his arm in, with pistol in hand, at the opening of the window, and fired. He was quickly lowered by Fulljames, and a few moments later he was round on Main Street in front of the bank, with Pettit and others. Mr. Trevalyn himself made the noises and turned off the lights while groping for the doorknob.

After finding the body Longstaff picked the diamond up from the floor, and a little later ran into the vault, snatched a parcel of bills from the innermost compartment, threw it in a corner of the outside compartment—the combination of whose door he knew and could open at any time—and came hurrying out in sight of Mr. Pettit and others, with nothing in his hands, saying: "You go in, Pettit. It's your place."

Next night he and Fulljames entered the bank by means of Patterson's manufactured keys, secured the money from the outer compartment of the vault, and left a bogus diamond on the floor. After this Fulljames hinted to Patterson that he had secret information that the diamond was still in the bank, Mr. Trevalyn having dropped it, and as he hoped for, Patterson conveyed it to Basset. The idea was to have Basset's gang caught in an attempt to rob the bank, so that the murder would be laid to their door.

This was part of the Clairville commotion. The rest was the trial, conviction and punishment of Fulljames and Longstaff, and the escape of the erring Basset. Patterson managed to get away from the place, too, without being punished, and many are glad of it, for he has since led an exemplary life, having received a terrible warning. The diamond and the money were found in Longstaff's house.

Of Steve and Will Ewart, we need not speak, knowing that such good young men must prosper. Moreover, we have already left them in the care of Poynter's friend, the white-haired gentleman, and, as he has adopted them as sons, they cannot come to want. This Col. Willoughby afterwards married Mrs. Ewart, whom he had long loved.

The Trevalyn boys, Ned Tuckett and the Ewarts are great friends, and no wonder. If an additional reason were wanted it may be found in the fact that Steve is engaged to Gwendolin Trevalyn, and when the event comes off Ned Tuckett is to be his "best man."

#### THE END.

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